Introduction

All Praise is due to Allaah, we praise Him, seek His aid and His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allaah from the evils of our souls and the evils of our actions. Whomsoever Allaah guides there is none to misguide and whomsoever Allaah misguides there is none to guide. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allaah, alone, without any partners and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

To proceed:

Knowledge of Allaah and His names and attributes is the noblest and best of all knowledge, because the level of honour of any kind of knowledge has to do with the object of knowledge, and the object of knowledge in this case is Allaah (Praise and Glory be to Him), through His names, attributes and deeds. Occupying oneself with seeking this knowledge and studying it properly is the pursuit of the highest objective, and acquiring this knowledge is one of the best gifts a person may be given.

Knowing Allaah makes a person love and fear Him, and put his hope in Him, and be sincere towards Him in his actions. This is the essence of human happiness. There is no way to know Allaah except by knowing His most beautiful names and seeking a proper understanding of their meanings.

Knowing Allaah by His most beautiful names increases one’s faith. The more a person learns about the names and attributes of Allaah, the more his faith increases and the stronger his conviction becomes.

People have written on this important aspect of tawheed in English, with a view to disseminating knowledge. Unfortunately, most of their works were devoid of the essence, excellence, fundamentals, foundations and rules of Allaah’s names and attributes, as well as the guidelines for understanding them. Most of

the books contained merely fables illustrating the supposed power produced by repetition of the divine names in certain combinations and manners. Most of them turned Allaah's names and attributes into good luck charms giving them magical qualities that cannot be found anywhere in the Qur'aan and the authentic Sunnah. The few books that are free from this distortion were mostly based on the weak narration of Imaam at-Tirmidhee, Ibn Maajah and Al-Haakim, in which the listing of Allaah's most beautiful names occurred.

Two books written by our Nigerian brothers on the subject matter prompted the appearance of the present work. One, by brother Nooru Muhammad Khaalid Jos entitled 'A Guide to the most beautiful names of Allaah' based on Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-`Uthaymeen's *al-Qawaa'id al-Muthlaa*, and the other one published by Bait-ul-Ilm Limited, Lagos, based on Shaykh `Abdur-Rahmaan bn Naasir as-Sa`dee's *Sharh Asma'ullah al-Husnaa* contained in his famous tafseer *Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan fi Tafseer Kalaam al-Mannaan*. May Allaah accept their effort and reward them bountifully. Having gone through them, one felt that there was still need for further research to fill in some gaps evident in the books mentioned above.

This book therefore, represents a humble attempt to provide the highlights of the essence, fundamentals, foundations and rules of Allaah's most beautiful names and sublime attributes. One is not, in any way, claiming to have completely filled in the gaps pointed earlier. Rather, the book is just a way forward towards understanding the basics of *tawheed al-Asmaa was-Sifaat* in a more elaborate but concise manner, in the light of the Qur'aan, the authentic Sunnah of our noble Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and the statements of the learned and trustworthy scholars.

I want to express my profound and unreserved gratitude to Allaah for making it possible for me to come up with something like this. Then to all those that assisted in one way or the other to the success of the book, especially Shaykh Ja'afar Mahmood Aadam of

Uthmaan bn Affaan Islaamic Trust Kano[1] and brother `Abdus-Samee` Abdus-Salaam of al-Bayyinah foundation, Port Harcourt. They encouraged me to write the English version of the book after writing the Hausa version of it. My gratitude goes to my family for their patience and understanding during my research and my brothers for their usual support. I will not forget to mention my able English and Hausa editor, Malam Inuwa Dikko, for a job well done.

May Allaah accept it as an act of worship and reward all of us bountifully. Comments and observations are highly welcomed.

Ahmad Bello Dogarawa
Ramadaan, 1428

[1] Shaykh Ja'afar Mahmood Adam had completely reviewed the Hausa version of this book since 2001 and was satisfied with all its content. He even wrote a foreword to the book and then encouraged me to write the English version (not translation) of it. The Shaykh did not live to see either versions as Allaah took his life in 2007. May Allaah forgive and admit him in *al-Jannah al-Firdaus*.

Tawheed of Allaah's Names and Attributes

Tawheed literally means unification or asserting oneness. It technically means the realising and maintaining of Allaah's unity in all of man's actions, which directly or indirectly relate to Him. It is the belief that Allaah is One, without partner in His dominion and His actions, One without similitude in His essence and attributes, and One without rival in His divinity and in worship.[2]

Tawheed is the essence of Islaam and the mainspring of its strength. All other laws, beliefs and commands of Islaam stand firm on this foundation. If you take it away there is nothing left of Islaam. It is the call of all the prophets to their people. The acceptance of all of one's religious deeds is based upon tawheed.

Fulfilling tawheed is the purpose of man's life. By declaring sincere belief in tawheed, a disbeliever will become a Muslim. Conversely, a Muslim will become a disbeliever (kaafir) if he rejects any aspect of it. By tawheed, we achieve salvation from Eternal punishment in the Hereafter, right guidance in this world, and forgiveness for sins.

Tawheed prevents man from eternally remaining in the Hellfire. Whoever fulfils tawheed will be admitted to the Garden (al-Jannah) in the Hereafter.

It is the way to relieve peoples' sadness because true happiness can be achieved if persons realize tawheed within their hearts. They will also never feel psychologically enslaved even if physically captive. It is the only reason for Allaah's pleasure and rewards.

Tawheed is traditionally divided into three major categories. These categories are:

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[2] Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, *The Fundamentals of Tawheed*, (Tawheed Publications Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1990), p. 1

1. *Tawheed ar-Ruboobiyah* (Maintaining the Unity of Lordship)

2. *Tawheed al-Uloohiyah* (Maintaining the Unity of Allaah's worship)

3. *Tawheed al-Asmaa was-Sifaat* (Maintaining the Unity of Allaah's names and attributes)

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) or his noble Companions (may Allaah be pleased with him) did not divide tawheed into several components, as there was no necessity to analyse such a basic principle of faith in that manner at that time. That is, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and his companions (may Allaah be pleased with them) did not sit in circles of learning and begin teaching tawheed by saying, 'category one of tawheed is such and such…' Nonetheless, each of the foundations and components of the categories of tawheed are clearly based in the Qur'aan and the authentic statements of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and his companions.[3]

The third category of tawheed, which is the tawheed of Allaah in His most beautiful names and highest attributes, involves describing Allaah by only the names and attributes with which He and His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) have described Him. The tawheed of Allaah in His names requires the belief in each and every name He ascribed to Himself; and belief in the qualities and consequences incorporated in them. For example, *ar-Rahmaan* 'the Merciful', which was mentioned in the Qur'aan on more than one occasion, one must believe in it as one of the names of Allaah, believe in the fact that mercy is one of the attributes of Allaah, and also believe that Allaah has mercy upon whomever He wishes. The same applies to all the other names of Allaah mentioned in the Qur'aan or in the Sunnah of His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

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[3] For details read any book of tawheed based on the *Aqeedah* of Salaf

The names of Allaah are those proper nouns employed in reference to Him in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah. Every one of those names refers to one or more attributes of Allaah. Each name is derived from its verbal noun, such as the All-Knowing (al-'Aleem), the Able (al-Qaadir), the All-Hearing (as-Samee'), the All-Seeing (al-Baseer), and so on. The name al-'Aleem (the All-Knowing), for example, is derived from the attribute of 'knowledge', and the same is true of the Merciful (ar-Rahmaan), etc.

The name that incorporates the meanings of all the other nouns and attributes is the name 'Allaah' (الله). Some scholars, such as Ibnul-Qayyim, Sibawayh and At-Tabari, contended that it is derived from the word '*al-Ilaah*', meaning the God. Others maintained that it is not derived from any other word. There is no contradiction between those names being adjectives or nouns. The name 'Merciful' (ar-Rahmaan), for instance, is both a proper noun and an adjective. All of Allaah's names are adjectives of praise as well as being references to their proper meanings. Those names were described as beautiful (husnaa in Arabic) because they describe the most excellent and Exalted Creator.[4]

The tawheed of Allaah in His attributes requires the belief in all the most complete attributes of Allaah, and that Allaah must be referred to according to how He and His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) have described Him without explaining away His attributes by giving them meanings other than their obvious meanings. According to Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-`Uthaymeen, ‘The attributes of Allaah mentioned in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah are of two types:

1. Individual attributes (الصفات الذاتية): Those are the attributes that are fixed constituents of Allaah, constant parts of His very being. They include knowledge, life, power, hearing,

[4] Adapted from Islam Q&A (www.islam-qa.com)

seeing, the face, the hands, speech, sovereignty, majesty, exaltation, self-sufficiency, mercy and wisdom.

2. Attributes of actions (الصفات الفعلية): Those are the attributes connected with Allaah's Will and Power, such as His occupation of the Throne, His descent, marvelling, laughter, pleasure, love, detestation, wrath, joy, anger, stratagem and cunning.

Our obligation towards both types of attributes is confirming their ascription to Allaah, Glorious and Mighty is He, in accordance with meanings that befit His perfection. Those are the real meanings that are devoid of any comparison, negation, or false interpretation.'[5]

Allaah says: "And Allaah has the most excellent and perfect names, so call on Him by them, and abandon the company of those who deviate and commit shirk with regard to them – they will be punished for what they used to do."[6] Allaah says: "Say: 'Call on Allaah or on ar-Rahmaan. By whatever name you call (is well). His are the most beautiful names.'"[7] He also says: "He is Allaah. There is no god but Him. His are the most beautiful names."[8] He also says: "He is Allaah, the Creator, the Originator, the Modeller. His are the most gracious names. All that is in heaven and earth glorifies Him. He is the Mighty, the Wise One." [9]

In another place, Allaah states: "His is the highest and most perfect description (none has the right to be worshipped but Him, and nothing is like Him) in the heavens and the earth, and He is the

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[5] Muhammad Saalih al-`Uthaymeen, *Sharh al-`Aqeedah al-Waasitiyah*, (Daar at-Thurayya, 1998), pp. 60-62. See also his *al-Qawaa`id al-Muthlaa fee Sifaat Allaah wa Asmaa'ih al-Husnaa*, (al-Jaami`ah al-Islaamiyyah, Madeenah, Saudi Arabia, 1410AH), p. 25
[6] al-A`araaf 7:180
[7] al-Israa 17:110
[8] Taaha 20:8
[9] al-Hashr 59:24

All-Mighty, the All-Wise."[10] He also states: "There is nothing like Him, He is the All-Seeing, the All-Hearing."[11]

The difference between the names and attributes of Allaah is that the names of Allaah are all those names that refer to Allaah Himself and also refer to one of His perfect attributes that exist in Him, such as *al-Qaadir* (the All-Powerful), *al-'Aleem* (the All-Knowing), *al-Hakeem* (the Most Wise), *al-Samee*' (the All-Hearing), *al-Baseer* (the All-Seeing). These names refer to Allaah Himself and to His qualities of power, knowledge, wisdom, hearing, and sight. So the names refer to two things, while attributes refer to one thing. And it was said that the name includes the attribute and the attribute implies the name.[12]

In general, the unification of Allaah's names and attributes (tawheed al-Asmaa was-Sifaat) means the firm conviction that Allaah, the Glorious and Mighty, is characterised by all the attributes of perfection, is above all defects and deficiencies, and that He alone is distinguished from His creation by these characteristics.

Foundations of Tawheed of Allaah's Names and Attributes

The tawheed of Allaah's names and attributes is based upon four foundations. Whoever deviates from them does not attest to the tawheed of Allaah's names and attributes.

1. For the unity of Allaah's names and attributes to be maintained, Allaah must be referred to according to how He and His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) have described Him without explaining away His names and attributes by giving them meanings other than their obvious meanings. For example, Allaah in the Qur'aan says He gets angry with the disbelievers

[10] an-Nahl 16:60
[11] as-Shoorah 42:11
[12] *al-Lajnah ad-Daa'imah lil Buhooth al-`Ilmiyah wal Iftaa*, (al-Idaarah al-`Aamah lit-Tiba'i wat-Tarjamah, Saudi Arabia, 1411AH), 3/116

and the hypocrites. Thus, anger is one of God’s attributes. It is incorrect to say that His anger must mean His punishment since anger is a sign of weakness in man and, as such, not befitting of Allaah. What Allaah has stated should be accepted with the qualification that His anger is not like human anger, based on Allaah’s statement, “There is nothing like Him”.[13]

2. Allaah’s attributes and qualities are part of the knowledge of the *ghayb* – that which is unseen and beyond human capability to perceive – and cannot therefore, be subjected to our human senses. Revelation is the only channel through which we can acquire true knowledge of the ghayb. A quality of the pious, for which they are praised in the Qur’aan, is that they believe in the ghayb without questioning or doubting it, as long as it comes from the Qur’aan or the authentic Sunnah.[14]

   This further requires a person to believe in these names and attributes mentioned in the Qur’aan and the authentic Sunnah without inquiring after their nature and manner or investigating their essence. As attributes vary according to the self they characterize, finding out how they manifest themselves depend upon knowing that self and how it acts. As we cannot inquire into the nature of Allaah, His essence and into how His actions take place, we cannot then ask about the way in which His attributes are manifested.

3. Belief in the names and attributes established in the Qur’aan and the authentic Sunnah, without detracting from them, expanding upon them, altering or nullifying them. In other words, the believer should believe in the names and attributes of Allaah mentioned in the Qur’aan and the authentic Sunnah, comprehend them by the clear and common meanings they have in Arabic language, with no amendments or alteration of their evident, direct meaning.

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[13] Muhammad Saalih al-`Uthaymeen, *Sharh al-`Aqeedah al-Waasitiyah,* p. 60
[14] Muhammad Saalih al-`Uthaymeen, *Sharh al-`Aqeedah al-Waasitiyah,* p. 58

This principle stipulates that the only names and attributes to be ascribed to Allaah are those mentioned in the Qur'aan or in the authentic Sunnah; they are directly communicated to us and are not the products of opinion and interpretation. Allaah is to be described only by the attributes with which He had described Himself or with which His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) had described Him. And He is to be named only by the names with which He had named Himself or with which His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) had named Him.

Allaah surely knows best about Himself, His names and His attributes. Allaah says: "Do you know better or does Allaah?"[15] As He knows best about Himself, and His Messengers were truthful and believed, only telling their people what Allaah had revealed to them, then His names and attributes should be derived solely from the Qur'aan and authentic Sunnah.

Imaam Ahmad bn Hanbal (may Allaah have mercy upon his soul), said: "Allaah should only be attributed with those characteristics He described Himself with or was described by His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). His names and attributes should not extend beyond the Qur'aan and Sunnah."[16]

Nu`aim bn Hammaad, the teacher of al-Bukhaaree, said: "A person who compares Allaah to His creation becomes disbeliever (Kaafir), and a person who denies the attributes Allaah ascribed to Himself, or that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) ascribed to Him, has become disbeliever. None of those attributes bear any likeness or comparison."[17]

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[15] al-Baqarah 2:140
[16] Muhammad Khaleel Harraas, *Sharh al-`Aqeedah al-Waasitiyah*, (al-Maktabah as-Salafiyyah, Madeenah, 1386AH), p. 21
[17] Muhammad Khaleel Harraas, *Sharh al-`Aqeedah al-Waasitiyah*, pp. 21-22

4. The names of Allaah are restricted to proof from the Qur’aan and authentic Sunnah, and no one from his mind and thinking can start to give names for Allaah. In other words, Allaah, the Creator, cannot be subjected to the limited faculties of His creatures.[18]

   According to Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, Allaah is infinite and, as such cannot be comprehended in the absolute sense by the finite minds of human beings. Man cannot even comprehend the universe in which he lives or even the soul and the mind within his body, so how can he, in all honesty, hope or seek to comprehend Allaah? However, in His infinite mercy, Allaah has described Himself in human languages in order that man may know something of the divine attributes, that man may feel closer to Allaah and that he may not confuse the Creator’s attributes with those of created things. Thus, man only knows about Allaah what little Allaah has chosen to reveal to him through His Prophets. And man in turn, must stay within those limits. Any attempts to describe Allaah in ways other than those recorded in the Qur’aan or the authentic Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is considered to be in opposition to this important aspect of tawheed.[19]

   Allaah, the Most High, says in the Qur’aan: “Say: ‘My Lord has forbidden all indecent acts, whether overt or disguised, sin and wrongful operation; He has forbidden you to associate with Him that which is not sanctioned by Him, or to tell of Allaah what you do not know”.[20] He also says: “And do not follow what you

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[18] Ibn Hajar in *Fath al-Baaree* (Daar al-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon), vol. 11 p. 217 quoted this statement from Abul-Hasan al-Qaabisee and Abul-Qaasim al-Qushayree. See also *Sharh al-`Aqeedah al-Waasitiyah*, p. 62 and *al-Qawaa`id al-Muthlaa*, p. 13 both by Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-`Uthaymeen

[19] Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, *Tafseer Soorah al-Hujuraat* (Tawheed Publications Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1990), p. 149

[20] al-A`araaf 7:33

do not know”. [21]He also says: “Do you know better or does Allaah?”[22]

Accordingly, Shaykh Yahya Al-Hajooree quoted the following statements of scholars regarding Allah’s names and attributes:[23]

- Imaam Ash-Shaafi’ee (may Allaah have mercy upon him) said: “Allaah, the Most High, has names and attributes, which His Book (the Qur’aan) has come with, and His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) has informed of. There is no room for anyone from the creatures of Allaah, the Most High, whom the proof has been established upon him, to refute (or deny) them.”

- Imaam Ahmad (may Allaah have mercy upon him) said about the attributes: “And they are not known except by what Allaah described Himself with. So He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing. And those who describe him do not reach the full extent of his Attribute, and one is not to go beyond the Qur’aan and the Hadeeth (in describing Him). So we say just as He (Allaah) said, and we describe Him with what He used to describe Himself, and one is not to go beyond the Qur’aan.”

- Imaam Abu Bakr Muhammad bin Ishaaq said: “So we, and all of the Salaf, from the people of the Hijaaz, and Tihaamah, and Al-Yemen, and Al-‘Iraaq, and Ash-Shaam, and Misr (Egypt), our Math-hab (way) is that we affirm for Allaah what he affirmed for Himself.”

- Imaam Abu Bakr Ahmad Al-Ismaa’eelee, said: “And they believe that Allaah is called by His beautiful names, and described by His attributes, which His Prophet (peace and

[21] al-Israa 17:36
[22] al-Baqarah 2:140
[23] www.sh-yahia.net/files.php?file_id=76

blessings of Allaah be upon him) named and described Him with.”

- Imaam Abu Nasr ‘Ubaydullaah bin Sa’eed As-Sijzee said: “And indeed the Imaams have agreed that the attributes should only be taken as tawqeefiyyah (restricted to the texts) and it is not permissible that Allaah be described except with what He described Himself, or with what His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) described Him with.”

- Imaam Ibn ‘Abdil-Barr said: “Ahlus-Sunnah are unanimously agreed in confirming the attributes that are reported in the Book (Qur’aan) and the Sunnah, and believing in them according to the literal meaning, and not as figurative meanings.”

- Abul-Qaasim Al-Qushayree said: “The names are to be taken as tawqeef (restricted) from the Book (Qur’aan) and the Sunnah, and the Consensus (Ijmaa’).”

- Abul-Hasan Al-Qaabisee said: “The names of Allaah, and His attributes are not known except by the tawqeef (restrictive texts) from the Book (Qur’aan) and the Sunnah, or the Consensus (Ijmaa’), and one is not to enter into them with analogy (Qiyaas).”

- Ibn Mundah said: “And the names of Allaah, and His attributes are tawqeefiyyah (restricted to the texts), and Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa’ah do not affirm for Allaah anything but what He affirmed for Himself in His Book (Qur’aan), or what has been authenticated from the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).”

- Ibn Hazm said: “So it is correct that it is not permissible that Allaah be named with any name except what He named Himself with.”

- Al-Imaam Al-Baghawee said: “The names of Allaah, the Most High, are taken as tawqeef (restricted to the texts of the Qur’aan and the Sunnah).”

- Shaikh ul-Islaam ibn Taymiyyah (may Allaah have mercy upon him) said: “And the conglomerate of statements regarding the affirmation of the attributes is the statement that the Salaf of the Ummah were upon and its Imaams, and it is that Allaah is described by what He described Himself with, and by what His Messenger described Him with. And that is to be safeguarded from at-Tahreef (distortion of meaning), at-Tamtheel (likening with the creation), at-Takyeef (describing how they are), and at-Ta’teel (denial of them). ‘*There is nothing like Him***.’** (Ash-Shooraa:11) These (at-Tahreef, at-Tamtheel, at-Takyeef, and at-Ta’teel) are not to be applied to His Self, His attributes, nor to His actions.”

Knowing the Beautiful Names of Allaah

Undoubtedly, acquiring the knowledge of Allaah, and His names and attributes as well as understanding their meanings is one of the best gifts a person may be given. The knowledge will guarantee one of the three categories of tawheed to the person, which will consequently result in the following:

1. Good understanding of the meaning and implications of tawheed and how to call on Allaah by His most beautiful names

2. Love for and fear of Allaah and increase in faith

3. Worship of Allaah as ordained by Him through the observance of His dos and don'ts[24]

`Isaam bn `Abdul-Mun`im said: "Knowledge of the most beautiful names of Allaah, their meanings and implications is an aspect of tawheed many people neglect today. These people are finding it difficult to translate into action the knowledge of Allaah and His names and attributes or call on Allaah by them. How do you expect the one that sincerely believes in the name of Allaah '*al-`Aleem*' (The all-Knowing) and understands the attribute of His all encompassing knowledge that was not preceded by ignorance and will not be followed by forgetfulness, to indulge in all forms of sins, knowing fully that Allaah knows what is in the heavens and on earth: and He knows what he conceal and what he reveal, and shall call him accountable for his deeds? Or how can one believe that Allaah is *ar-Razzaaq* (The Provider), the One Who provides for all of His servants, and yet follow other deviant means of getting provision from other beings? Or how can the person that believe in the forgiveness of Allaah and that Allaah is *at-Tawwaab* (the Oft-Returning), the One Who is continuously turning (in forgiveness) to those that turn to Him (in repentance), but persists in wrongdoing and looses hope in the forgiveness of Allaah? The person that acquire the knowledge of Allaah's most beautiful names and the attributes contained in them, and sincerely believes in their meanings and implications will always translate their implications into action."[25]

According to the book '*Asmaa'ullah al-Husnaa*',[26] 'Knowledge of Allaah and His names and attributes is the noblest and best of all knowledge, because the level of honour of any kind of knowledge has to do with the object of knowledge, and the object of knowledge in this case is Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted, through His

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[24] Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyah, *Badaa'i` al-Fawaa'id*, (Maktabah al-Nizar Mustafa al-Baaz, Makkah, 1996), vol. 1, p.171
[25] `Isaam bn `Abdul-Mun`im, *al-Matlab al-Asna min Asma'illah al-Husna*, (Daar Ibn Rajab, Cairo, 1996), p. 17
[26] Adapted from Islaam Q&A (www.islam-qa.com)

names, attributes and deeds. Occupying oneself with seeking this knowledge and studying it properly is the pursuit of the highest objective, and acquiring this knowledge is one of the best gifts a person may be given. Because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) explained it very clearly and was very keen to do so, the Sahaabah never disputed in this matter as they did over some of the rulings (ahkaam).

Knowing Allaah makes a person love and fear Him, and put his hope in Him, and be sincere towards Him in his actions. This is the essence of human happiness. There is no way to know Allaah except by knowing His most beautiful names and seeking a proper understanding of their meanings.[27]

Knowing Allaah by His most beautiful names increases one's faith, as Shaykh `Abdur-Rahman ibn Nasir as-Sa'adi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: "Believing in and knowing the most beautiful names of Allaah includes the three types of tawheed: *Tawheed al-Ruboobiyyah* (Unity of divine Lordship), *Tawheed al-Uloohiyyah* (Unity of the divine Nature) and *Tawheed al-Asma' was-Sifaat* (Unity of the divine names and attributes). These three types of tawheed form the essence and joy of faith (the word translated here as "joy" implies peace and relief from stress), and this knowledge is the basis and purpose of faith. The more a person learns about the names and attributes of Allaah, the more his faith increases and the stronger his conviction becomes." [28]

Allaah created His creatures to know Him and worship Him. This is what is expected from them and what they are required to do, because as Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: "The key to the call of the Messengers, the essence of their Message, is knowing Allaah through His names and attributes and deeds, because this is the foundation on which the rest of the Message, from

[27] Umar Sulayman al-Ashqar, *al-Aqeedah Fillah*, (Daar an-Nafaa'is, Oman, 1999), pp. 216-217

[28] Abdur-Rahman Nasir as-Sa'adi, *At-Tawdeeh wal Bayaan li Shajaratil Eemaan*, (Maktabah al-Ma'aarf, Riyadh, 1406), p. 41

beginning to end, is built." So when a person occupies himself with learning about Allaah, he is doing what he was created for, but if he ignores the matter, he is neglecting what he was created for. The meaning of faith is not merely to utter words without knowing Allaah, because true faith in Allaah means that the slave knows the Lord in Whom he believes, and he makes the effort to learn about Allaah through His names and attributes. The more he learns about his Lord, the more he increases in faith.[29]

Knowledge of the names of Allaah is the basis for all other knowledge, as Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: "Knowledge of the most beautiful names of Allaah is the basis of all other kinds of knowledge, for the objects of all these other branches of knowledge were either created or commanded by Him (the various branches of knowledge either deal with objects created by Him or with the laws and guidance revealed by Him). The reason for creation and guidance is found in His most beautiful names (because He is the Creator, He creates things; because He is the Guide to the Straight Path, He reveals guidance, and so on)... Knowing the most beautiful names is the basis of all objects of knowledge, because all knowledge stems from these names..."[30]

In summary, tawheed of Allaah’s names and attributes represents half of eemaan in Allaah; it is without exception, the most noble and most important branch of knowledge; and it is the origin of all religious knowledge. Knowledge of Allaah’s names and attributes is a great and important tenet within the methodology of the salaf. Knowledge of the names and attributes of Allaah opens the door for the servant to knowing Allaah, since the basis of sound knowledge is eemaan in Allaah and in his names and attributes. Knowledge of Allaah’s names and attributes is life to the hearts.[31]

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[29] Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyah, *as-Sawaa'iq al-Mursalah 'ala al-Jahamiyyah wal-Mu'attilah*, (Daar al-`Aasimah, Riyadh, 1998), vol. 1, pp. 150-151

[30] Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyah, *Badaa’i` al-Fawaa’id*, vol. 1. p. 171

[31] Muhammad ibn Khaleefah at-Tameem, *Mu’utaqad Ahlis-Sunnah wal Jamaa’ah fi Tawheedil Asmaa was Sifaat*, (Adwa as-Salaf, Riyadh, 1999), pp. 7-14

Excellence and Beauty of Allaah's Names

The names of Allaah are absolutely perfect, complete and excellent and are free from deficiency and shortcoming. Allaah (Blessed be He, the Most High) says in the Qur'aan: "And Allaah has the most excellent and perfect names, so call on Him by them, and abandon the company of those who deviate and commit shirk with regard to them – they will be punished for what they used to do."[32] In another place, Allaah states: "His is the highest and most perfect description (none has the right to be worshipped but Him, and nothing is like Him) in the heavens and the earth, and He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise." [33]

Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy upon him) said: "There is absolutely nothing to indicate any form of deficiency, shortcoming or invention in the names of Allaah. They are perfect, excellent, complete and all-encompassing names. It is with these names that He is being called on."[34]

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy upon him) said: "The names of the Lord Most High are both names and attributes. They point to His attributes of Greatness and Perfection, with no contradiction between their being attributes and their being names. Hence they are called most excellent and most beautiful (*al-Husna*)."[35]

As-Shaykh Sulaymaan bn `Abdillah (may Allaah have mercy upon him) said: "The names of Allaah, which indicate His attributes, are the most complete and most perfect names. There is absolutely no other name that can match or compete with them, nor are there other names that could replace them."[36]

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[32] al-A`raaf 7:180

[33] an-Nahl 16:60

[34] Ahmad bn Abdil-Haleem bn Taymiyah, *Majmoo` al-Fataawaa*, (Maktabah Ibn Taymiyah), vol.6, p. 143

[35] *Madaarij as-Saalikeen*, vol.1, p. 28

[36] *Tayseer al-`Azeez al-Hameed fee sharh Kitaab at-Tawheed*, p. 572

According to as-Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-`Uthaymeen,[37] 'The names of Allaah reach the extreme of perfection; they are perfect and complete in every single aspect. Allaah says, ‘And Allaah has the most excellent and perfect names’.[38] This is because these names represent the attributes of perfection that are free from all forms of deficiency or shortcoming.

For example, *al-Hayy* (The Living) is one of the names of Allaah the Most High that point to the perfect life of Allaah that is not preceded by non-existence and will not be followed by death; the life that gives evidence to other perfect attributes like knowledge, ability, hearing and seeing.

Another example: *al-`Aleem* (The All Knowing) is a name of Allaah that give evidence to the perfect and complete knowledge, which was not preceded by ignorance and will not be followed by forgetfulness. Allaah says: “My Lord alone has knowledge of that; it is recorded in His book. He does not err, nor does He forget.”[39] The knowledge of Allaah is vast and all encompassing, as it encompasses everything that relates to His actions or the actions of His creation. He says: “With Him are the keys of the Unseen, the treasures that none knoweth but He. He knoweth whatever there is on the earth and in the sea. Not a leaf doth fall but with His knowledge: there is not a grain in the darkness (or depths) of the earth nor anything fresh or dry (green or withered) but is (inscribed) in a Record Clear (to those who can read).”[40] He also says: “He knows what is in the heavens and on earth: and He knows what ye conceal and what ye reveal: yes Allaah knows well the (secrets) of (all) hearts.”[41]

Another example: *ar-Rahmaan* (The Beneficence) is a name of Allaah that confirms the overflowing mercy of Allaah that is perfect,

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[37] *Al-Qawaa`id al-Muthlaa*, pp. 6-7
[38] al-A`raaf 7:180
[39] Taha 20:52
[40] al-An`aam 6:59
[41] at-Taghaaboon 64:4

complete and vast and all encompassing. Allaah describes His mercy by saying: “My mercy extended to all things.”[42] He also says of the prayers of the angels for the believers: “Our Lord! Thy reach is over all things in Mercy and Knowledge.”[43]

Understanding the Names of Allaah[44]

There are three types of indications or senses of Allaah's beautiful names:

1. They essentially point to the one being described or named.

2. They point to attributes that are derived from them directly.

3. They point to necessary attributes that are not directly from the name.

For example, the names of Allaah ‘*ar-Rahmaan*’ and *‘ar-Raheem*’:

- They point to the one being described, namely Allaah.

- They indicate an attribute or characteristic that can be directly derived from them. Namely *rahmah* (mercy).

- They point to characteristics that are not directly derived from them but are necessary for them to be actual. That is, to be *ar-Rahmaan* (The Possessor of Mercy) or *ar-Raheem* (the Bestower of Mercy upon His creation), Allaah must then necessarily have the quality of life (al-hayaat), and power or ability (al-qudrah).

Such is the case with all the names of Allaah. This as opposed to created beings who although called *wise* (hakeem) may in actuality be *ignorant* (jaahil), or *just* (hakam) while really being *oppressive*

[42] al-A`raaf 7:156
[43] al-Ghaafir 40:7
[44] The whole of this section was adapted from Islaam Q&A (www.islam-qa.com)

(zhaalim), or *strong* and *respected* ('azeez) while in reality *weak* and *despicable* (dhaleel), or *noble* (shareef) although truly *lowly* (wadee"), or *generous* (kareem) while in fact *miserly* (la'eem), or *righteous* (saalih) while actually *wicked* (taalih), or *joyfu*l (sa'eed) when *miserable* (shaqiyy).

There are four classes of derivations of names:

1. The proper name that includes all of the meanings of each name and attribute or characteristic. Namely, the name Allaah. This is why other names or attributes are always used to describe Allaah and never the other way around.

2. Those which include a characteristic of Allaah's self such as the name *as-Samee'* (The Hearer) which indicates His personal quality of possessing perfect and all-encompassing hearing of everything whether out loud and open or quiet and hidden. Also His name *al-Baseer* (The Seer) which is inclusive of His sight penetrating that of all that which can be seen no matter how infinitesimal or great. Likewise His name *al-'Aleem* (The Knower) which indicates all-encompassing knowledge, *al-Qadeer* (The Able) indicating omnipotence and power over everything in excellence and implementation or anything else.

3. Those which characterize Allaah's actions such as *al-Khaaliq* (The Creator), *ar-Raaziq* (The Sustainer), *al-Baari*' (The Initiator), *al-Musawwir* (The Fashioner) and the like.

4. Those which indicate nullification, negation or impossibility of any imperfection or fault such as *al-Quddoos* (The Holy), *as-Salaam* (The Perfect and Source of Peace).

The Number of Allaah's Name[45]

al-Bukhaaree and Muslim reported on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Allaah has ninety nine names, 100 minus one; and he who counts them all will enter al-Jannah (the Garden of Heaven), and Allaah is "Witr" (One) and loves the witr (i.e. odd numbers).

"Counting" Allaah's ninety nine names means: knowing them, learning them by heart, understanding them, believing in them, good observance towards them, presentation of their boundaries in our dealings with Allaah, and supplicating to Allaah through them. [46] Thus, according to Abu Umar At-Talmankiy, the hadeeth means that whoever committed those names to memory, contemplated their implications, respected their meanings, conducted himself in accordance with them, sanctified their Owner, such a person will surely be rewarded with the Gardens of Paradise.[47]

There is a consensus among the scholars, according to al-Imaam an-Nawawi, that Allaah's names are not confined to the number mentioned by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). His (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) statement simply tells us that a Muslim who properly believes in and applies those 99 names will surely enter al-Jannah. It does not negate the existence of other names for the Almighty. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) told us about entering al-Jannah, not about the total number of Allaah's names.[48] Ibn Taymiyyah[49], Ibn at-Tayyib[50], Sulayman bn Abdillah[51] and Hafizh

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[45] Some people claim that Allaah's names are confined to 800, others say 1000, others say 1,001, yet others claim 4,000, and still others maintain 124,000. All these statements have no basis in the Qur'aan and Sunnah and should therefore be discarded.

[46] Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyah, *Badaa'i` al-Fawaa'id*, vol. 1 p. 171

[47] Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baaree*, vol. 11 p. 229

[48] Yahya bn Sharaf an-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh Muslim – Commentary on Saheeh Muslim*, (Daar al-Hadeth, al-Qaahirah, 1994), Vol.5, p. 17

[49] *Dar'u Ta'aaridil Aql Wan-Naql*, part 3, pp. 332-333

[50] Quoted in *Fathul Baari*, vol. 11 p. 224

bn Ahmad Hakami[52] maintained the same position with Imam an-Nawawi.

While commenting on the hadeeth, Jamaal al-Deen Zarabozo said: “It should be noted that the hadeeth states that Allaah has 99 names, 100 less one, it is not meant to be all-inclusive. That is, it does not mean that Allaah has 99 and only 99 names. Indeed, in going through the Qur’aan and authentic hadeeth of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) many scholars have been able to discover more than 99 names of Allaah. Furthermore, many scholars have concluded that Allaah has an infinite number of names.”[53]

The proof that there are other names, which the Creator did not reveal to us, is the following hadeeth of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): “If any Muslim afflicted with distress or grief makes this supplication:

اللهم إِني عبدك وابن عبدك ابن أمتك، ناصيتي بيدك، ماض في حكمك، عدل في قضائك، أسألك بكل اسم هو لك سميت به نفسك، أو أنزلته في كتابك، أو علمته أحدا من خلقك، أو استأثرت به في علم الغيب عندك، أن تجعل القرآن ربيع قلبي ونور صدري وجلاء حزني وذهاب همي

'Oh Allaah, I am Your slave, son of Your slave, son of Your maidservant. My forehead is in Your hand. Your command concerning me prevails, and Your decision concerning me is just. I call upon You by every one of the beautiful names by which You have described Yourself, or which You have revealed in Your Book, or have taught any one of Your creatures, or which You have chosen to keep in the knowledge of the unseen with You, to make the Qur'aan the delight of my heart, the light of my breast, and remove

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51 *Tayseerul Azeez Al-Hameed*, p. 579
52 *Ma’aarijul Qabool*, vol. 1, p. 117
53 *The Hadeeth naming the Ninety-nine Names of Allaah*, al-Basheer magazine, 8/2, July-August 1994, adapted from www.Islaam.com

of any grief, sorrows, and afflictions', Allaah will remove one's affliction and replace it with joy and happiness."[54]

It is common knowledge that whatever Allaah has kept for Himself (in the knowledge of the unseen) of His names cannot be known let alone counted by anyone.[55]

Determining the Names of Allaah

Shaykh Mahmud Abdur-Raaziq ar-Ridwaani, in his unique book on the authentic names of Allah, *Asmaa'ullah Al-Husnaa At-Thaabitah fil Kitaab was Sunnah* identified five broad categories of principles and conditions for determining the names of Allah.[56] The scholar, Umar Sulayman al-Ashqar on the other hand, listed the following principles and conditions:[57]

1. Limiting their number to what is contained in the Qur'aan and authentic Sunnah.

2. Not everything that the texts inform us concerning Allaah can be included as being from His names. Information, which familiarizes us about Allaah, is more inclusive than His names.

3. It is not permissible to derive names for Allaah from His attributes and actions.

4. It is not permissible to call Allaah by blameworthy and reprehensible names or those that give the impression of blame.

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[54] Ahmad, Abu Awaanah, al-Bazzaar and others: Saheeh
[55] Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyah, *Badaa'i` al-Fawaa'id*, vol. 1. p. 171
[56] Mahmud Abdur-Raaziq Ar-Ridwaani, *Asmaa'ullah Al-Husnaa At-Thaabitah fil Kitaab was Sunnah* (Maktabatul Ulum wal Hikam, Madeenah, 2004), part 1. pp. 23-46
[57] Umar Sulayman Al-Ashqar, *Asmaa'ullah wa Sifaatuh fi Mu'utaqad Ahlis-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah*, (Daar An-Nafaa'is, Oman, 1997), pp. 84-102

5. It is not permissible for the number of Allaah's names to be less than ninety-nine.

6. Any name that cannot be used for supplication is not one of the names of Allaah.

7. The attributes of His actions and the attributes of His names are not from the names of Allaah.

8. Names which have the same meaning but different wording are not excluded from being His names. It is not permitted to exclude from His most excellent names those, which are mentioned in the Qur’aan and Sunnah, and whose meanings are the same but whose wording is different claming that it is repetition. In truth it is not repetition in every sense.

9. It is not permissible to exclude names, which are used in annexation from Allaah's most excellent names if they have been mentioned in the Qur'aan and Sunnah.

10. The validity of using the term 'abd (slave) together with the names of Allaah for names of people. In fact it is not permissible for people to be called the slave of something, which is not one of Allaah's names.

11. Primary names are not from His names. Meaning names that do not contain a meaning connected to His most excellent names because His names are both proper names and attributes.

12. Whatever begins with *dhu* (possessor of) is not included among His names although among the greatest ways to supplicate and praise Him are by them. These fall into four categories:

    a) Those that are added to one of Allaah's attributes and they are of two kinds: Those where *dhu* is added to attributes, indicated by names which are explicitly mentioned in the Qur'aan and Sunnah. i.e. *dhu-ar-Rahmah* (Posessor of

Mercy), *dhu al-Quwwah* (Possessor of strength) and those where *dhu* is added to attributes that are not indicated by names mentioned in the Qur'aan and Sunnah. i.e. *dhu al-Fadl* (Possessor of favour), *dhu al-jalaal wal-Ikraam* (Possessor of majesty and honour)

b) Those where *dhu* is added to one of Allaah's actions. i.e. *dhul iqaab al-aleem* (Possessor of the painful punishment)

c) Those where *dhu* is added to a part of His creation. i.e. *dhu al-'arsh* (Possessor of the Throne)

d) Those names that are mentioned in the superlative form that are in annexation despite being one of the greatest ways to call upon Allaah i.e. *Arhamur-Raahimeen* (Most Merciful of the merciful), *Khairur-Raaziqeen* (the Best of providers)[58]

Listing the Names of Allaah

It has been mentioned in the hadeeth of al-Bukhaaree, Muslim and others (as quoted) that Allaah has 99 names, 100 minus one; and he who counts them all will enter al-Jannah (the Garden of Heaven). However, hadeeth experts agreed that there is nothing to establish from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) that he listed the 99 names of Allaah. The famous narrations of Imaam at-Tirmidhee, Ibn Maajah, Ibn Hibbaan and al-Haakim that have the above wording, but then go on to list the names are weak narrations according to the consensus of hadeeth experts.[59]

According to Jamaal al-Deen Zarabozo, ‘The hadeeth is well known among the scholars of hadeeth to be a weak hadeeth. Most of them consider the actual listing of the names as a later addition by one of the narrators of the hadeeth and some narrators mistakenly

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[58] Adapted from Islam Q&A (www.islam-qa.com)
[59] Shaykh al-Islaam Ibn Taymiyah, *Majmoo` al-Fataawaa,* vol.6, p. 386

included it in as part of the hadeeth. Among those scholars who rejected it as weak are: at-Tirmidhee, al-Bayhaqi, Ibn Hazm, al-Qaabisi, ad-Daawudi, Ibn Atee, Ibn al-Arabi al-Maaliki, Abu Zaid al-Balkhi, Ibn Taimiyyah, Ibn Katheer, Ibn Hajar, al-Juwayni, al-Albaanee, `Abdul Qaadir al-Arnaa'oot, Ibn Baaz and al-`Uthaymeen.'[60]

Most of these scholars have explained why the hadeeth is not authentic. However, a major problem that results from the hadeeth – which seems to be the basis for the posters that are made of the 99 names of Allaah (pasted or hung in the mosque, house, school, vehicle, etc by many people) – is that it contains some names, which are not considered names of Allaah. Similarly, it falls short of many of the names of Allaah from the text of the Qur'aan and authentic Sunnah.

Ibn Hajar, for instance, in *Fath al-Baari* has removed 27 names from the list of at-Tirmidhee's weak narration and replaced them with another 27. The names removed by Ibn Hajar are: *al-Qaabid, al-Baasit, al-Khaafid, ar-Raafi', al-Mu`iz, al-Mudhil, al-`Adl, al-Jaleel, al-Baa'ith, al-Muhsee, al-Mubdee, al-Mu`eed, al-Mumeet, al-Waajid, al-Maajid, al-Muqaddim, al-Mu'akkhir, al-Walee, Dhul Jalaal Wal Ikraam, al-Muqsit, al-Mughniee, al-Maani', ad-Daar, an-Naafi' al-Baaqee, ar-Rasheed* and *as-Saboor*.[61] He replaced them

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[60] *The Hadeeth naming the Ninety-nine Names of Allaah*, al-Basheer, 8/2, July-August 1994, adapted from Islaam.com. See also *Fath al-Baaree*, vol.11, pp. 220-221 and *Al-Matlabul Asnaa*, pp. 35-40

[61] The list of Allaah's most beautiful names as occurred in at-Tirmidhee's narration with the unauthentic names underlined based on Ar-Ridwaani's book, *Asmaa'ullah Al-Husnaa At-Thaabitah fil Kitaab Was-Sunnah*, is as follows:

هو الله الذي لا إله إلا هو الرَّحمنُ الرَّحيمُ المَلِك القُدُّوسُ السَّلاَمُ المُؤْمِنُ المُهَيمِنُ العَزِيزُ الجَبَّارُ المُتَكَبِّر الخَالِقُ البَارِىءُ المُصَوِّرُ الغَفَّارُ القَهَّارُ الوَهَّابُ الرَّزَّاقُ الفتَّاحُ العَلِيمُ القَابِضُ البَاسِطُ الخافِضُ الرَّافِعُ المعزُّ المذِل السَّمِيعُ البَصِيرُ الحكَمُ العَدْلُ اللّطِيفُ الخَبِيرُ الحَلِيمُ العَظِيمُ الغَفُورُ الشَّكُورُ العَلِيُّ الكَبِيرُ الحَفِيظُ المُقِيتُ الحَسِيبُ الجَلِيلُ الكَرِيمُ الرَّقِيبُ المُجِيبُ الْوَاسِعُ الحَكِيمُ الوَدُودُ المَجِيدُ البَاعِثُ الشَّهِيدُ الحَق الوَكِيلُ القَوِيُّ المَتِينُ الوَلِيُّ الحَمِيدُ المُحْصِي المُبْدِيءُ المُعِيدُ المُحْيِي المُمِيتُ الحَيُّ القَيُّومُ الوَاجِدُ المَاجِدُ الوَاحِدُ الصَّمَدُ القَادِرُ المُقْتَدِرُ المُقَدِّمُ المُؤَخِّرُ الأوَّلُ الآخِرُ الظَّاهِرُ البَاطِنُ الوَالِي المُتَعَالِي البَرُّ التَّوَّابُ المنتَقِمُ العَفُوُّ الرَّءوف مَالِكُ المُلْكِ ذُو الجَلاَلِ وَالإكْرَامِ المُقْسِطُ الجَامِعُ الغَنِيُّ المُغْنِي المَانِعُ الضَّارُّ النَّافِعُ النُّورُ الهَادِي البَدِيعُ البَاقِي الوَارِثُ الرَّشِيدُ الصَّبُور .

According to Ibn Majah's narration, the list is as follows:

with the following: *ar-Rabb*, *al-Ilah*, *al-Muheet*, *al-Qadeer*, *al-Kaafee*, *as-Shaakir*, *as-Shadeed*, *al-Qaa'im, al-Haakim*, *al-Faatir*, *al-Ghaafir*, *al-Qaahir*, *al-Maula*, *an-Naseer*, *al-Ghaalib*, *al-Khaaliq*, *ar-Rafee', al-Maleek*, *al-Kafeel*, *al-Khallaaq*, *al-Akram*, *al-A'alaa, al-Mubeen*, *al-Hafiy*, *al-Qareeb*, *al-Ahad*, and *al-Haafizh*.[62]

Ibn Hajar concluded by saying that all the names (after the adjustment) are contained in the Qur'aan. If Allaah spares his life, he will exclude those names that have the same meaning with others (like al-Qadeer, al-Muqtadeer and al-Qaadir; al-Gafoor, al-Gaafir

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اللَّه الْوَاحِدُ الصَّمَدُ الأوَّلُ الآخِرُ الظَّاهِرُ الْبَاطِنُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ السَّلامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ
الْمُهَيْمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ
الْعَلِيمُ الْعَظِيمُ الْبَارُّ الْمُتْعَالِ الْجَلِيلُ الْجَمِيلُ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ الْقَادِرُ الْقَاهِرُ الْعَلِيُّ
الْحَكِيمُ الْقَرِيبُ الْمُجِيبُ الْغَنِيُّ الْوَهَّابُ الْوَدُودُ الشَّكُورُ الْمَاجِدُ الْوَاجِدُ الْوَالِي الرَّاشِدُ
الْعَفُوُّ الْغَفُورُ الْحَلِيمُ الْكَرِيمُ التَّوَّابُ الرَّبُّ الْمَجِيدُ الْوَلِيُّ الشَّهِيدُ الْمُبِينُ الْبُرْهَانُ
الرَّءُوفُ الرَّحِيمُ الْمُبْدِئُ الْمُعِيدُ الْبَاعِثُ الْوَارِثُ الْقَوِيُّ الشَّدِيدُ الضَّارُّ النَّافِعُ الْبَاقِي
الْوَاقِي الْخَافِضُ الرَّافِعُ الْقَابِضُ الْبَاسِطُ الْمُعِزُّ الْمُذِلُّ الْمُقْسِطُ الرَّزَّاقُ ذُو الْقُوَّةِ
الْمَتِينُ الْقَائِمُ الدَّائِمُ الْحَافِظُ الْوَكِيلُ الْفَاطِرُ السَّامِعُ الْمُعْطِي الْمُحْيِي الْمُمِيتُ الْمَانِعُ
الْجَامِعُ الْهَادِي الْكَافِي الأَبَدُ الْعَالِمُ الصَّادِقُ النُّورُ الْمُنِيرُ التَّامُّ الْقَدِيمُ الْوِتْرُ الأَحَدُ
الصَّمَدُ الَّذِي لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

The list, according to Al-Haakim's narration, is as follows:

الله الرحمن الرحيم الإله الرب الملك القدوس السلام المؤمن المهيمن العزيز
الجبار المتكبر الخالق الباريء المصور الحليم العليم السميع البصير الحي القيوم
الواسع اللطيف الخبير الحنان المنان البديع الودود الغفور الشكور المجيد المبديء
المعيد النور الأول الآخر الظاهر الباطن الغفار الوهاب القادر الأحد الصمد الكافي
الباقي الوكيل المجيد المغيث الدائم المتعال ذو الجلال والإكرام المولى النصير
الحق المبين الباعث المجيب المحيي المميت الجميل الصادق الحفيظ الكبير القريب
الرقيب الفتاح التواب القديم الوتر الفاطر الرزاق العلام العلي العظيم الغني
المليك المقتدر الأكرم الرءوف المدبر المالك القدير الهادي الشاكر الرفيع الشهيد
الواحد ذو الطول ذو المعارج ذو الفضل الخلاق الكفيل الجليل الكريم البادي
العفو الحميد المحيط

[62] The list of Allaah's names from the Qur'aan alone as researched by al-Haafidh Ibn Hajar in *Fath al-Baaree* and *Talkhees al-Habeer* is as follows:

الله الرحمن الرحيم الملك القدوس السلام المؤمن المهيمن العزيز الجبار المتكبر الخالق الباريء المصور الغفار
القهار التواب الوهاب الخلاق الرزاق الفتاح العليم الحليم العظيم الواسع الحكيم الحي القيوم السميع البصير
اللطيف الخبير العلي الكبير المحيط القدير المولى النصير الكريم الرقيب القريب المجيب الوكيل الحسيب الحفيظ
المقيت الودود المجيد الوارث الشهيد الولي الحميد الحق المبين القوي المتين الغني المالك الشديد القادر المتقدر
القاهر الكافي الشاكر المستعان الفاطر البديع الغافر الأول الاخر الظاهر الباطن الكفيل الغالب الحكم العالم الرفيع
الحافظ المحيي الجامع المليك المتعالى النور الهادي الغفور الشكور العفو الرءوف الاكرم الأعلى البر الحفي
الرب الإله الواحد الأحد الصمد الذي لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفوا أحد

and al-Gaffaar; al-Malik, al-Maalik and al-Maleek; etc) and complete the list from the authentic Sunnah.[63]

It is obvious that we cannot rely on the narration of Imaam at-Tirmidhee or Ibn Maajah or Al-Haakim to determine the 99 most beautiful names of Allaah. This explains why scholars such as Ahmad bn Shu`ayb an-Nasaa'ee in *an-Nu`oot al-Asmaa was-Sifaat*, al-Khattaabee in *Sha'anud Du'aa*, Ibn Mundah in *at-Tawheed*, Al-Haleemee in *al-Minhaaj fi Shu'ubil Eemaan*, al-Baihaqee in *al-Asmaa was Sifaat*, Ibn Hazm in *al-Muhallaa*, Ibn al-Arabee in *Ahkaamul Qur'aan*, al-Qurtubee in *al-Asnaa fi Sharh al-Asmaa al-Husnaa*, Ibn al-Qayyim in *al-Kaafiyah as-Shaafiyah* (*Nooniyyah*), *Badaa'i al-Fawaa'id*, Ibn al-Wazeer in *Eethaarul Haq alal Khalq*, Ibn Hajar in *Fath al-Baaree* and *Talkhees al-Habeer*, `Abdur-Rahmaan bn Naasir as-Sa`dee in *Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan*, Muhammad Saalih al-`Uthaymeen in *al-Qawaa'id al-Muthlaa*, Abdul-Muhsin al-Abbaad in *Qatf al-Janiy ad-Daaniy*, Abdullah Saalih al-Ghusn in *Asmaa'ullah Al-Husnaa*, Umar Sulayman al-Ashqar in *Asmaa'ullah wa Sifaatuh fi Mu'utaqid Ahlis-Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah*, `Isaam bn `Abdul-Mun`in in *al-Matlab al-Asnaa min Asma'illah al-Husnaa*, Sa'eed al-Qahtaanee in *Sharh al-Asmaa al-Husnaa*, Muhammad Hamd al-Hamood in *al-Manhaaj al-Asmaa*, Nurul Hasan Khaan in *al-Jawaa'iz was Silaat*, Abdul-Azeez Naasir Jaleel in *Walillah al-Asmaa al-Husnaa*, Mahmud Abdur-Raaziq ar-Ridwaani in *Asmaa'ullah Al-Husnaa At-Thaabitah fil Kitaab was Sunnah* and many others[64] seek to discover the 99 names of Allaah from the Qur'aan and authentic Sunnah.[65]

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[63] Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baaree*, vol.11, p. 222

[64] In the course of writing this small book, I read all the books and treatises mentioned above and many others. Praise be to Allaah.

[65] Al-Imaam as-Shawkaanee, in *Tuhfah ad-Dhaakireen*, p. 70, inclined to the authenticity of at-Tirmidhee's narration, which contains the listing of Allaah's most beautiful names. He also pointed that al-Haakim and Ibn Hibbaan have declared the narration Saheeh, while Imaam an-Nawawi declared it Hasan. This assertion was however; refuted by hadeeth experts on the basis that some declarations made by al-Haakim, Ibn Hibbaan and an-Nawawi are not to be relied upon. In the case of al-Haakim and Ibn Hibbaan, scholars said that they are too lenient in their assessments and their methodology of acceptance and rejection is not compatible with general standard. As for an-Nawawi, scholars said that he relied so much (in particularly his *al-Adhkaar*)

99 Names of Allaah from the Qur'aan and authentic Sunnah

A critical analysis of the list of the names contained in the popular hadeeth of at-Tirmidhee reveals that thirty (30) names are not to be found in the Qur'aan or authentic Sunnah. These names are:

الجَلِيلُ	العَدْلُ	المذِل	المعزُّ	الرَّافِعُ	الخافضُ
المُمِيتُ	المُحْيِي	المُعِيدُ	المُبْدِيءُ	المُحْصِي	البَاعِثُ
ذو الجلال والإكرام	مَالِكُ المُلْكِ	المنتَقِمُ	الوَالِي	المَاجِدُ	الوَاجِدُ
النَّافِعُ	الضَّارُّ	المَانِعُ	المُغْنِي	الجَامِعُ	المُقْسِطُ
الصَّبُور	الرَّشِيدُ	البَاقِي	البَدِيعُ	الهَادِي	النُّورُ

al-Khaafid, ar-Raafi', al-Mu'izz, al-Mudhil, al-`Adl, al-Jaleel, al-Baa`ith, al-Muhsee, al-Mubdee, al-Mu`eed, al-Muhyee, al-Mumeet, al-Waajid, al-Maajid, al-Waalee, al-Muntaqeem, Maalik-ul-Mulk, Dhul-Jalaal-Wal-Ikraam, al-Muqsit, al-Jaami', al-Mughnee, al-Maani', an-Naafi', ad-Daarr, an-Noor, al-Haadee, al-Badi', al-Baaqee, ar-Rasheed and *as-Saboor.*

Some of the above mentioned names are not to be found completely in the Qur'aan or authentic Sunnah. They include *al-Jaleel*, *as-Saboor*, *ar-Rasheed* and *al-Maani`*. While some did not occur in the Qur'aan as names that refer to Allaah Himself and also refer to one of His perfect attributes that exist in Him. In other

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on declarations of the likes of at-Tirmidhee, An-Nasaa'ee, Ibn Hibbaan and Ibn as-Sunnee who are known with too much leniency in their assessments, rather than taking his time to do the assessment himself. Further investigation and critical analysis of the chain of narration of the hadeeth authenticated by these people are therefore, needed to establish the authenticity or otherwise. Shaykh Muhammad Naasiruddeen al-Albaanee mentioned these facts in some of his works, which include: *Silsilah al-Ahaadeeth ad-Da`eefah, Tamaam al-Minnah* and his *additional notes on Riyadh as-Saaliheen.*

words, they are attributes of His actions and the attributes of His names, which are not from the names of Allaah as stated earlier. names that fall under this category from the list of at-Tirmidhee include *al-Khaafid, ar-Raafi', al-Mu'izz, al-Mudhil, al-`Adl, al-Baa`ith, al-Muhsee al-Mubdee, al-Mu`eed* and *al-Mughnee*.[66]

It has been stated above that whatever begins with *Dhu* (possessor of) is not included among the names of Allaah although among the greatest ways to supplicate and praise Him are by them. In *Dhul-Jalaal-Wal-Ikraam*, the possession 'dhu' was added to attributes that are not indicated by names mentioned in the Qur'aan and Sunnah, and cannot therefore be included among the names of Allaah. [67]

To complete the list, scholars have researched the following names from the Qur'aan and authentic Sunnah. From the Qur'aan, we have: *al-Qadeer, al-Maula, an-Naseer, al-Qareeb, al-Mubeen, al-Qaahir, as-shaakir, al-Maleek, al-Akram, al-A`alaa, al-Ilah, al-Khallaaq* and *al-Waarith*. There is disagreement among scholars on *al-Waarith*.[68] The correct opinion is that it is one of Allah's most beautiful names.[69] *al-Hakam*, *al-Qaabit* and *al-Baasit*, *al-Muqaddim*

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[66] See Mahmud Abdur-Raaziq ar-Ridwaani, *Asmaa'ullah Al-Husnaa At-Thaabitah fil Kitaab was Sunnah*, part 1, pp. 98-104

[67] For further reading, see *Fath al-Baaree*, vol.11, pp. 218-223

[68] Ibn Hajar in *Fath al-Baaree*, al-`Uthaymeen in *al-Qawaa`id al-Muthlaa* and ar-Ridwaani in *Asmaa'ullah Al-Husnaa At-Thaabitah fil Kitaab Was-Sunnah* have however, included it in the list of Allaah's ninety-nine names

[69] References for the names researched from the Qur'aan are given below:

1. الله الرحمن الرحيم (59:22)
2. الملك القدوس السلام المؤمن المهيمن العزيز الجبار المتكبر (59:23)
3. الخالق الباريء المصور (59:24)
4. الأول الآخر الظاهر الباطن (57:3)
5. الوهاب (3:8)
6. الفتاح العليم (34:26)
7. السميع البصير (42:11)
8. اللطيف (6:10)
9. العظيم (2:255)
10. الحليم الغفور (2:225)
11. الشكور (35:30)

and *al-Muakkhir* are not from the Qur'aan. They however, occur in the authentic Sunnah.

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12. العلي الكبير (22:62)
13. المبين الحق (24:25)
14. الغني الحميد (31:26)
15. الحي القيوم (2:255)
16. الواحد القهار (39:4)
17. الحكيم الخبير (6:73)
18. المولى النصير (22:78)
19. الرزاق المتين (51:58)
20. البر (52:28)
21. الغفار (20:82)
22. الحفيظ (11:57)
23. المقيت (4:86)
24. الحسيب (4:85)
25. الكريم (27:40)
26. الرقيب (5:117)
27. القريب المجيب (11:61)
28. الواسع (2:115)
29. الودود (85:14)
30. المجيد (11:73)
31. الشهيد (3:98)
32. الوكيل (3:173)
33. القوي (11:66)
34. الولي (42:9, 28)
35. الأحد (112:1)
36. الصمد (112:2)
37. القادر (6:65)
38. المليك المقتدر (54:55)
39. المتعال (13:9)
40. التواب (2:32)
41. العفو (22:60)
42. الرءوف (3:30)
43. المالك (3:26); Muslim
44. القدير (30:54)
45. القاهر (6:61)
46. الشاكر (2:158)
47. الإله (16:51)
48. الخلاق (15:86)
49. الأكرم (96:3)
50. الأعلى (87:1)
51. الوارث (28:58; 15:23; 21:89)

Scholars have disagreed on *al-Ghaalib*, *al-Haafizh*, *al-Muheet*, *al-Hafiy*, *al-`Aalim* and *Maalikul Mulk*. Both al-`Uthaymeen and `Isaam Abdul-Mun'eem included *al-Muheet*[70] in their lists. al-`Uthaymeen mentioned *al-Haafizh*, *al-Hafiy* and *al-`Aalim*[71] while `Isaam mentioned *al-Ghaalib*.[72] Ar-Ridwaani on the other hand, mentioned *al-Maalik*[73] in place of *Maalikul Mulk*.

From the authentic Sunnah, we have: *al-Musa'ir*, *al-Qaabit*, *al-Baasit* and *ar-Raaziq* (Abu Daawud and at-Tirmidhee: *Saheeh*)[74], *al-Jameel* (Muslim)[75], *al-Jawwaad* (Ahmad, at-Tirmidhee and Ibn `Asaakir: *Saheeh bi as-Shawaahid*)[76], *al-Hakam* (Abu Daawud: *Saheeh li ghairih*)[77], *al-Hayiyyu* (at-Tirmidhee: *Saheeh bi as-*

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[70] Based on 85:20

[71] Based on 12:64; 19:47

[72] Based on 12:21

[73] Based on 3:26

[74] al-Qaabid (The Taker) and al-Baasit (The Extender) are names of Allaah derived from an authentic hadeeth. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Indeed Allaah is al-Musa`ir (The Pricesetter), *al-Qaabid* (The Constrictor), *al-Baasit* (The Munificient), *ar-Raaziq* (The Provider)..." [Abu Daawud and at-Tirmidhee].

These names are not derived from the Qur'aan, as some people believe. According to many scholars, including Ibn Hajar, al-`Uthaymeen and `Isaam bn `Abdul-Mun`im, the names are only found in the authentic Sunnah.

[75] The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) stated, 'Verily Allaah is *al-Jameel* (The Beautiful) and He loves beauty' [Muslim]. Allaah (Praise and Glory be to Him) is beautiful in His Self, His names, His attributes and His actions.

[76] The name al-Jawwaad occurred in a number of ahaadeeth. The narrations supported one another as explained by `Isaam bn `Abdul-Mun`im in his book '*al-Matlab al-Asnaa*. Ibn `Asaakir reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Verily, Allaah is *Kareem* (The Kind) and loves the Kuramaa (the kinds); He is *Jawwaad* (The Bestower of Good) and loves goodness." This hadeeth was declared Saheeh by al-Albaanee in *Saheeh al-Jaami` as-Sagheer* 2/123

Scholars such as Ibn Mundah, al-Haleemee, al-Bayhaqee, Ibn al-Qayyim, `Abdur-Rahmaan as-Sa`dee and Muhammad Saalih al-`Uthaymeen mentioned *al-Jawwaad* among the authentic names of Allaah. [See *al-Matlab al-Asnaa* by `Isaam bn `Abdul-Mun`im, p. 49-54]

[77] It is narrated by Abu Daawud on the authority of Shuraih bn Haani (may Allaah be pleased with him): "When I, along with the delegation of my clan, visited the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), he noticed that the people of my clan were addressing me with a patronymic appellation of Abul-Hakam. He (the Prophet) called

Shawaahid)[78], *ar-Rabb* (Muslim and an-Nasaa'ee)[79], *as-Subbooh* (Muslim)[80], *as-Sayyeed* (Ahmad and Abu Daawud: *Saheeh*)[81], *as-Shaafiy* (Bukhaaree and Muslim)[82], *at-Tayyib* (Muslim)[83], *al-Mu`utee* (Bukhaaree)[84], *al-Muqaddim* and *al-Mu'akkhir* (Bukhaaree

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me and said, *al-Hakam* (The Judge) is none but Allaah Himself. Only His commandments are effective."

78 This is derived from the statement of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): 'Verily Allaah is *al-Hayee* (The Shy). He is shy to let His slave return empty-handed if he outstretches his hands to Him.' [Abu Daawud, At-Tirmidhee and Ibn Maajah]

79 The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "I have been prohibited from reciting while bowing or prostrating. During the bowing, glorify *ar-Rabb* (The Lord). During the prostrations, strive your hardest in making supplications. Most likely, you will be listened to." [Muslim]

80 The name is derived from one of the supplications of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) while bowing and prostrating in prayers. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to say in his Ruku` and Sujood: " *Subbooh* (The Perfect), *Quddoos* (The Holy) Lord of the angels and the Rooh (angel Gabriel) [Muslim]

81 Abu Daawud reported that Mutarrif bn `Abdullah (may Allaah be pleased with him) along with a delegation of Banoo Aamir tribesmen, went to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said: "You are our Sayyid (Master)! The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) answered, 'Allaah is *as-Sayyid* (The Master)'. They said, 'You are superior to us, elder than us and more generous than we are.' The Prophet answered, 'Yes, you can say all or some of these things about me, but I am afraid lest the devil should make you arrogant."

82 This name is derived from the hadeeth of al-Bukhaaree: 'Whenever Allaah's Apostle paid a visit to a patient, or a patient was brought to him, he used to invoke Allaah, saying, "Take away the disease, O the Lord of the people! Cure him as You are *as-Shaafee* (The One Who cures). There is no cure but Yours, a cure that leaves no disease."'

83 Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "O people, Allaah is *Tayyib* (The Good) and He, therefore, accepts only that which is good. And Allaah commanded the believers as He commanded the Messengers by saying, 'O Messengers, eat of the good things, and do good deeds; verily I am aware of what you do,' [Qur'aan 23.51], and He said: 'O those who believe, eat of the good things that We gave you'." [Qur'aan 2.172] The Prophet, peace be upon him, then made mention of a person who travels widely, his hair dishevelled, and covered with dust. "He lifts his hands and makes supplication, 'O Lord, O Lord,' but his diet is unlawful, his drink is unlawful, and his clothes are unlawful, and his nourishment is unlawful. How then can his supplication be accepted?" [Muslim]

84 This is one of the most beautiful and perfect names of Allaah. It is derived from the statement of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) as recorded by Imaam al-Bukhaaree: "Whoever Allaah wants good for He gives him understanding in religion and Allaah is *al-Mu`tee* (The Giver) and I am al-Qaasim (The Distributor), and

and Muslim)[85], *al-Witr* (Ahmad, Bukhaaree and Muslim)[86], *ar-Rafeeq* (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)[87], *al-Mannaan* (Abu Daawud and Ibn Maajah: *Saheeh*)[88], *as-Sitteer* (Abu Daawud: *Saheeh bi as-Shawaahid*)[89], *al-Muhsin* (at-Tabraani: *Saheeh*)[90] and *ad-Dayyaan* (Ahmad and al-Haakim: *Hasan*)[91]

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this (Muslim) nation will remain victorious over their opponents, till Allaah's Order comes and they will still be victorious "

[85] In Saheeh al-Bukhaaree and Muslim, When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) got up at night to offer the Tahajjud (night voluntary) prayer, he used to say: "O Allaah! All the praises are for you, You are the Holder of the Heavens and the Earth, And whatever is in them. All the praises are for You; You have the possession of the Heavens and the Earth And whatever is in them. All the praises are for You; You are the Light of the Heavens and the Earth And all the praises are for You; You are the King of the Heavens and the Earth; And all the praises are for You; You are the Truth and Your Promise is the truth, And to meet You is true, Your Word is the truth And Paradise is true And Hell is true And all the Prophets (Peace be upon them) are true; And Muhammad is true, And the Day of Resurrection is true. O Allaah! I surrender (my will) to You; I believe in You and depend on You. And repent to You, And with Your help I argue (with my opponents, the non-believers) And I take You as a judge (to judge between us). Please forgive me my previous and future sins; And whatever I concealed or revealed. And You are *al-Muqaddim* (The Expediter, the One who make [some people] forward) and *al-Mu'akkhir* (The Delayer, the One who brings [some people] backward. There is none to be worshipped but You."

[86] Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) reports that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Allaah has 99 names - one hundred minus one. Whoever encompasses them, enters paradise. He is *Witr* ('The Odd-Numbered') and he loves things witr." [al-Bukhaaree]

[87] This is derived from the statement of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) from a authentic hadeeth: Allaah is *ar-Rafeeq* (The Gentle) and loves gentleness and He gives with gentleness to the extent He does not give with harshness nor does He give of anything in equal measure to it. [Muslim]

[88] *al-Mannaan* is one of the Excellent names of Allaah mentioned by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). In a hadeeth from Anas Ibn Malik (may Allaah be pleased with him) who said: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) heard a man saying: "Oh Allaah I ask and beseech you because for You is the praise and there is nothing worthy of worship besides You [You are Alone and without partner] *al-Mannaan*, Oh Badee'us samaawaati wal-ard (Originator of the heavens and the Earth), Oh Dhul Jalaali wal ikraam (Possessor of Majesty and Honour), Oh al-Hayy, al-Qayyoom (Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent), I beg You for al-Jannah and seek Your refuge from an-Naar." So the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, This man has beseeched Allaah with His Greatest Name by which if one asks by it he is given and if he supplicates by it he will be answered.' [Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhee, Ibn Majah, Ibn Hibaan, Ahmad, Al-Haakim, An-Nasaa'ee: Saheeh]

[89] *as-Sitteer* is one of the most beautiful names of Allaah mentioned in the statement of the noble Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): 'Verily Allaah Mighty

Below is the list of Allaah's 100[92] most beautiful names from the Qur'aan and authentic ahaadeeth using the pattern of at-Tirmidhee's narration:[93]

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and Majestic is Haleem (Forebearing), Hayee (Shy), *Sitteer* (Covering). He loves modesty and shyness and covering. Therefore when any of you bathe let him cover himself (i.e. from the sight of people).' [Abu Daawud, An-Nasaa'ee, al-Baihaqi, Ahmad and graded as saheeh]

[90] The name occurred in the hadeeth of Shaddaad bn Aws (may Allaah be pleased with him) from the Apostle of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) who said: "Verily Allaah the Most High is *al-Muhsin* (The Good), He loves goodness. So if you kill make it a good killing; if you slaughter make it a good slaughter; let each one of you put a good edge on the knife and make his victim die quickly." [at-Tabraanee and was declared Saheeh by al-Albaanee in Saheeh al-Jaami` 2/129].

Shaykh al-Islaam bn Taymiyah in *Majmoo` al-Fataawaa* and his student Ibn al-Qayyim in *al-Qaseedah an-Nooniyah* have mentioned *al-Muhsin* among the most beautiful and perfect names of Allaah. Also, Muhammad Saalih al-`Uthaymeen mentioned it in his *al-Qawaa`id al-Muthlaa*.

[91] This name is not mentioned in the Qura'n , but the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: " Allaah will gather the people and call them with a Voice which will be heard by those who will be far away and those who will be near; By saying: 'I am *Al –Maalik* (The King) , I am *Ad-Dayyaa*n (The One who judges people for their deeds after calling them to account .)"

[92] We make it 100 names due to the inclusion of الله (the name that incorporates the meanings of all other nouns and attributes).

[93] The list is the product of my little research effort based on al-`Uthaymeen's *al-Qawaa'id al-Muthlaa,* Abdul-Muhsin al-Abbaad's *Qatf al-Janiy ad-Daaniy,* Abdullah Saalih al-Ghusn's *Asmaa'ullah Al-Husnaa*, `Isaam's *al-Matlab al-Asnaa min Asma'illah al-Husnaa* and ar-Ridwaani's *Asmaa'ullah Al-Husnaa At-Thaabitah fil Kitaab was Sunnah*

الله	القابض	الحكيم	الآخر	الإله
الرحمن	الباسط	الودود	الظاهر	الخلاق
الرحيم	السميع	المجيد	الباطن	الوارث
الملك	البصير	الشهيد	المتعالى	الرازق
القدوس	الحكم	الحق	البر	الرب
السلام	اللطيف	الوكيل	التواب	الستير
المؤمن	الخبير	القوي	العفو	الوتر
المهيمن	الحليم	المتين	الرءوف	المنان
العزيز	العظيم	الولي	المالك	المعطى
الجبار	الغفور	الحميد	الغني	المحسن
المتكبر	الشكور	الحي	القدير	الطيب
الخالق	العلي	القيوم	المولى	الشافى
الباريء	الكبير	الواحد	النصير	السيد
المصور	الحفيظ	الأحد	القريب	السبوح
الغفار	المقيت	الصمد	المبين	الرفيق
القهار	الحسيب	القادر	القاهر	الجواد
الوهاب	الكريم	المقتدر	الشاكر	الجميل
الرزاق	الرقيب	المقدم	المليك	الحيي
الفتاح	المجيب	المؤخر	الأكرم	المسعر
العليم	الواسع	الأول	الأعلى	الديان

Note that:

1. The above list is not all-inclusive. Still there is room for further research to discover more of Allaah's most beautiful names. What is important is for anybody researching on the names to keep to the rules and conditions that determine the names of Allaah stated above.

2. Each name of Allaah possesses an attribute, and can therefore, be attributed to Allaah. The attributes of His actions and the attributes of His names on the other hand, are not from the names of Allaah. It is not permissible to derive names for Allaah from His attributes and actions. For example, Allaah's attributes of actions, according to the Qur'aan and authentic Sunnah, include 'to come' [المجىء or الإتيان], 'holding' [الإمساك or الأخذ],

‘vengeance’ [البطش], ‘anger’ [الغضب], ‘wish’ [الإرادة], ‘abiding forever’ [البقاء] and ‘descending’ [النزول]. We can only ascribe these attributes to Allaah, but cannot derive names for Him from them. Thus, it is not permissible to call Allaah: *al-Jaa’ee* [الجائى] or *al-Aatee* [الآتى] or *al-Mumsik* [الممسك] or *al-Aakhidh* [الآخذ] or *al-Baatish* [الباطش] or *al-Gaadib* [الغاضب] or *al-Mureed* [المريد] or *al-Baaqee* [الباقى] or *an-Naazil* [النازل].[94]

3. Allaah’s names in the definite form cannot be given to His creation unless preceded by the prefix *`Abd* meaning, “slave of” or “servant of”.[95] Many of the divine names in their indefinite form like *Ra`oof* and *Raheem* are allowable names for men because Allaah has used some of them in their indefinite forms to refer to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): “A messenger has come to you from among yourselves to whom anything which burdens you is grievous. He is full of concern for you and is full of pity (*Ra`oof*) and full of mercy (*Raheem*)”.[96] But *ar-Ra`oof* (the One Full of Pity) and *ar-Raheem* (the One Full of Mercy) can only be used to refer to men if they are preceded by *`Abd* as in *`Abdur-Ra`oof* or *`Abdur-Raheem*, since in the definite form they represent a level of perfection which only belongs to God.[97]

4. The use of the prefix *`Abd* before the most beautiful names of Allaah in their definite forms is restricted to the authentic names of Allaah. It is not permissible to call on Allaah by any name that cannot be established from the Qur’aan or the authentic Sunnah. For example, *ar-Raafi’, al-Jaleel, al-Waajid, al-Maajid, al-Jaami’, al-Mughni, an-Naafi’, al-Haadi, al-Badi’, al-Baaqi, ar-Rasheed* and *as-Saboor* are not among the names of Allaah,

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[94] Muhammad Saalih al-`Uthaymeen, *al-Qawaa`id al-Muthlaa*, p. 21; Umar Sulayman al-Ashqar, *Al-Aqeedah Fillah*, p. 211

[95] It is not permissible to call someone ar-Rahmaan or ar-Raheem. Rather, it must be preceded by the prefix ‘`Abd’ to show servitude to Allaah. Instead of ar-Rahmaan or ar-Raheem, it should be `Abdur-Rahmaan or `Abdur-Raheem

[96] at-Tawbah 9:128

[97] Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, *The Fundamentals of Tawheed*, p. 15

as stated earlier, since there is no proof in the Qur'aan or the authentic Sunnah to establish that they are names of Allaah. Hence, the use of the prefix *`Abd* before any of these names to refer to men is not allowed. Men cannot therefore be referred to as *`Abdur-Raafi'* or *`Abdul-Jaleel* or *`Abdul-Waajid* or *`Abdul-Jaami'* or *`Abdul-Mughni* or *`Abdun-Naafi`* or *`Abdul-Haadi*, or *`Abdul-Badi`* or *`Abdul-Baaqi* or *`Abdur-Rasheed* or *`Abdus-Saboor*.[98] Shaykh Yoosuf bn `Abdullah al-`Areefee said: "Giving names which are meant to show servitude to Allaah but using names not known to be from Allaah's perfect names – like *`Abdul-Mawjood*, *`Abdul-Maqsood* and *`Abdus-Sattaar* (is also forbidden).[99] This is because nothing can be affirmed as one of Allaah's names without an authentic text, and these names do not satisfy this as they are rather attributes and information, so it is to be feared that in this way we might fall into giving Allaah names which neither He nor His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used for Him."[100]

5. Names like *`Abdur-Rasool* (slave of the messenger), *`Abdun-Nabee* (slave of the Prophet), *`Abdul-Husayn* (slave of Husayn), etc., where people name themselves slaves to other than Allaah are also forbidden.[101] Based on this principle, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade Muslims from referring to those put under their charge as *`Abdee* (my slave) or *Amatee* (my slave girl).[102]

6. Names that indicate a general characteristic of Allaah are of two types:

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[98] It is advised that people answering Abdul-Jaleel, Abdul-Haadee, Abdur-Rasheed, Abdul-Naafi', Abdur-Raafi', etc., be called Jaleel, Haadee, Rasheed, Naafi', Raafi', etc.
[99] While *as-Sattaar* is not one of Allaah's most beautiful names, *as-Sitteer* has been established above as one of the names. Instead of *`Abdus-Sattaar*, *`Abdus-Sitteer* may be used to refer to men.
[100] *Manners of Welcoming New Born Baby According to Qur'aan and Hadeeth*, (Al-Fath Islamic Publications, Orile-Oshodi, Lagos, Nigeria), p. 46
[101] *`Abdul-Muttalib* also fall under this category
[102] Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, *The Fundamentals of Tawheed*, p. 15

- Names that can generally apply to Allaah singly or along with others that indicate absolute perfection or perpetuity like *al-Hayy* (The Ever-Living) / *al-Qayyoom* (The Self-Subsisting), *al-Ahad* (The Singular Unique) / *as-Samad* (The Eternal, Absolute) and so on. It is permissible to mention names of Allaah under this singly or along with others.

- Names that always appear with their opposite must be mentioned together; for if they were to be singular names it would imply a fault or shortcoming such as: *al-Qaabid* (The Constrictor) / *al-Baasit* (The Expander), *al-Awwal* (The First) / *al-Aakhir* (The Last), *az-Zhaahir* (The Manifest) / *al-Baatin* (The Hidden), *al-Muqaddim* (The Expiditer) / *al-Mu'akkhir* (The Delayer) and so on. It is not permissible to mention any of these names singly without their opposites. One cannot therefore, mention *al-Qaabid* and stop, rather he should mention *al-Qaabit* and *al-Baasit* together, and so on.[103]

Affirmation of Allaah's Characteristics[104]

Tawheed of Allaah's names and attributes means belief in everything which has come in the Qur'aan and the authenticated ahaadeeth regarding Allaah's attributes with which He described Himself in the Qur'aan or with which His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) has described Him without any distortion, negation, speculation or analogy.

This category of tawheed is achieved by:

1. Attesting to all the names and attributes of Allaah reported about Himself and those confirmed by Himself and those

[103] Isaam bn `Abdul-Mun`im, *al-Matlab al-Asnaa*, p. 43
[104] This section is based on al-`Uthaymeen's *al-Qawaa`id al-Muthlaa*, pp. 37-48, Abu Bakr Jaabir al-Jazaa'iree's *Minhaaj al-Muslim*, (Daar al-Fikr, 1976), pp. 15-17 and some articles adapted from Islam Q&A (www.islam-qa.com)

confirmed by His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) in the Qur'aan and authentic Sunnah.

2. Not altering their expression or meaning.

3. Not nullifying them by denying all or some of them.

4. Not modifying them by attempting to determine their essence and assigning certain form to them.

5. Not comparing them to any human characteristic such as assigning to Him the qualities that are not suiting His majesty but rather belong to His creation or assigning qualities that befit Allaah alone to His creation.[105]

Muslims must believe in the reality of Allaah's attributes just as they have come in the above sources, without attempting to analyse the "how" of any of them, nor to attempt to represent them with something else, nor to view them as equivalent to something else, nor to re-interpret them with other than their apparent meanings in the Arabic language, nor to distort or negate them, maintaining the belief that "There is nothing whatsoever similar to Him, and He is the Hearer, the Seer".

Unfortunately, this tawheed of names and attributes of Allaah is damaged by various mistakes, which should be avoided by Muslims especially, and all other people in general. For example, the *Mu'attilah* (the negators) deny Allaah's names and attributes, or some of them (*ta`teel*) claiming that to affirm them necessitate making a resemblance between Allaah, the Most High, and His creation. Also classified under this category are those who distort the names and attributes themselves or distort their meanings (*tahreef*).

The *Mushabbihah / Mumatthilah* (the resemblers) affirm the names and attributes and also declare Allaah, the Most High, to be

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[105] *The Categories of Tawheed*, p. 4, adapted from Islaam.com

like His creation. This category is divided into two: those that compare (*tashbeeh*) the attributes of the Creator such as the face, hand and hearing, and so on to the attributes of the human; and those that make a direct comparison or analogy (*tamtheel*) between one of Allaah's attributes and a human attribute having the same name, such as the Christians who believe Christ the son of Mary to be Allaah the Exalted and possess His abilities, the Jews who compared Uzair to Allaah, the polytheists who likened their idols to Allaah.

The two groups mentioned above are considered deviant groups because their beliefs contradicted the Qur'aan and the well established Sunnah, as well as the understanding and practice of our pious predecessors (the Sahaabah and their followers). Since this is deviation from the right path, the true Muslim should avoid it completely.

Taking the names and attributes of Allaah mentioned in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah at face value, without any comparison, alteration, negation, or seeking to ascribe a detailed understanding of their exact nature is the method of the companions of the Prophet (may Allaah be pleased with him), their followers and those who followed their followers. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "The best of generations is my generation. It is followed (in superiority) by the one, which comes after it, then the one that comes after that."[106] Thus a true believer will not deviate from their path.

The great scholar, Ash-Shawkaanee (may Allaah have mercy upon him) said: "The method adopted by the companions (may Allaah be pleased with him), their followers and those who followed them is to take the proofs of Allaah's attributes at face value, without any false interpretation, comparison nor negation. Whenever they were asked about any of Allaah's attributes, they would recite the evidence concerning it from the Qur'aan and the Sunnah and avoid any other references. They said: "Allaah said so, and this is the only

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[106] Bukhaaree

thing that concerns us. We do not talk about that which we know not, nor were we permitted to do so by Allaah." If the inquirer attempted to obtain any more out of them, they would chastise him for delving into what does not concern him. They forbade him from seeking what could never be attained without falling into heresy, which is not their path, nor is it what they had learned from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and from the companions and their followers. In that noble era, there was consensus about Allaah's attributes, and the path was one. Their only concern was with what Allaah had commanded them to do, and the obligations He had instructed them to fulfil. Those included: belief in Allaah, establishing regular prayers, paying Zakat, fasting, pilgrimage, jihad, charity, seeking beneficial knowledge, guiding the people to all types of good, seeking the reward of Paradise and avoiding the punishment of the Hell-Fire, enjoining good and forbidding evil, and rectifying transgressors as much as possible. They never occupied themselves with any other matter that Allaah had not instructed them to engage in, nor had they tarnished their worship with the innovation of inquiring after His nature and essence. In those days religion was pure and devoid of all heresy." [107]

Ahlus-Sunnah (the people of the Sunnah) acknowledge and believe that Allaah (Blessed be He, the Most High) is completely unlike and cannot be compared to any created being, neither in His essence, His attributes, His actions or His names. All of His names are glorious, and all of His attributes are attributes of perfection and absolute greatness. They do not negate or deny any of that with which He described Himself, nor [do they] distort the words out of their proper context. They do not deviate [with respect to] His names and His Verses. They do not seek detailed descriptions of the exact nature of His attributes without sources of that knowledge, nor compare His attributes with those of His creation, because there are none comparable to Him, nor any equal or partner!"

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[107] Muhammad bn Aliyy bn Muhammad as-Shawkaanee, *At-Tuhaf fee Mazhaahib as-Salaf*, (Daar al-Fajr li at-Turaath, 1990), p. 13 – English translation adapted from *al-Aqeedah Fillaah* by Shaykh Umar Sulayman Al-Ashqar

The ultimate and most concise proof of the position of Ahlus-Sunnah is found in the saying of Allaah, ‘There is nothing whatsoever similar to Him, and He is the Hearer, the Seer’[108] and the statement of Allaah, ‘And there exists nothing comparable to Him’[109], and then the saying of Allaah, ‘And to Allaah belong the most beautiful and perfect names, so call Him with them, and leave those who deviate with regard to His names – they will be fully repaid for all that they used to do’.[110]

The way of Ahlus-Sunnah is the safest method to use in order to avoid distortion is the method of the early generations of Muslims (as-Salaf). They confirmed the attributes which Allaah had confirmed for Himself and which His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) had confirmed for Him, without distorting interpretation nor making comparisons that are unbefitting of the Majesty and Oneness of Allaah. The Ahlus-Sunnah therefore, affirms the attributes mentioned in the Qur'aan and the authentic Sunnah, such as the face, the two hands, the residing in the heaven,[111] the occupation of the Throne, the descent to the lower

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[108] Ash-Shoorah 11
[109] al-Ikhalaas 112:4
[110] al-A`raaf 7:180
[111] It is extremely dangerous not to accept that Allaah is above the heavens. In fact, it is an aspect of Shirk in tawheed al-Asmaa was-Sifaat to claim for Allaah an attribute, which does not belong to Him or denied an attribute, which belong to Him. Both the Qur'an and the authentic Sunnah confirm Allaah's transcendence (al-Uluw) and His establishment on His Throne (al-Istiwaa ala al-Arsh). On the transcendence of Allaah, consider the following proofs:

1. "He is al-Qaahir (the irresistible) *above* His worshippers" [6:18 and 61]

2. "Those who fear their Lord who is *above* them" [16:50]

3. "Every good saying goes *up* to Him" [35:10]

4. "(And remember) when Allaah said: O Jesus! Lo! I am gathering thee and causing thee to *ascend* unto Me.." [3:55]

5. "The angels and the Spirit (Gabriel) *ascend up* to Him in a day whose length is like fifty thousand years" [70:4]

6. The narration about the Prophet's wife Zaynab bnt Jahsh who used to boast to the other wives of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) that their families gave them away in marriage to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) while Allaah from *above the seven heavens* gave her away in marriage" [narrated by Anas and collected by al-Bukhaaree, Arabic - English, vol.9, p. 382, no. 517]

7. Mu'aawiyah bn al-Hakam said, "I had a servant girl who used to tend to my sheep in the area of Mount Uhud, near a place called al-Jawwaareeyah. One day I came to see them only to find that a wolf had made off with a sheep from her flock. Since I, like the rest of Aadam's descendants, am prone to do regrettable acts, I gave her a terrible slap in her face. When I came to Allaah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) with the story, he considered it a grave thing for me to have done. I said, 'oh Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) couldn't I free her? He replied, 'Bring her to me', so I brought her. He (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) then asked her, 'Where is Allaah? and she replied, *'Above the sky'*. Then he asked her, 'Who am I? and she replied, 'You are Allaah's Messenger'. So he said, 'Free her, for verily she is a true believer.'" [Collected by Muslim - English Translation #1094]

8. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Would you not trust me even though I am the trustee of the *One Who is in the heaven*? [Saheeh al-Bukhaaree in Kitab al-Maghazee and Muslim in Kitaab az-Zakaah]

9. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "When Allaah finished creation, He wrote in a book that is with Him *above the Throne*: 'My Rahmah (beneficence) defeated my Ghadab (wrath)". [al-Bukhaaree and Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurayrah]

10. The popular hadith of Jaabir on al-Isra` wa al-Mi`iraj of the Prophet from Makkah to Masjid al-Aqsaa and then his *ascension to the heavens,* where he met Allaah (Praise and Glory be to Him). [Collected by Imaam Muslim]

11. The Prophet [S.A.W] said: "Be merciful to (the servants of Allaah) who are on earth and *the Merciful One Who is in the heavens* will be merciful to you" [at-Tirmidhee who declared it Hasan Saheeh]

12. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "No woman that will refuse the invitation of her husband to the bed to the extent that he slept angry with her, except that *the One in the heavens* gets angry with her until the husband is pleased with her" [Muslim]

13. Another proof may be found in the Du'aa [prayer] by which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) taught the sick to pray for themselves: "Rabbanaa Allaah alladhee fis-Samaa`e Taqaddasasmuka..." (Our Lord Allaah *Who is above*

the heavens, may Your name be Holy..) [Collected by Abu Daawud English Translation #3883]

14. The Aathars collected by, especially, `Abdullah bn Ahmad, Ibn Abi Shaybah, al-Laalakaa'ee, Ibn `Abdil-Bar and Ibn al-Munziree, which states that Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Aliyyu, Ibn Abbas, Ibn Mas`ud, and many others, among the Sahabah, hold that Allaah is in the heavens. [See *Ithbaat Sifah al-Uluw* by Ibn Qudaamah al-Maqdasee, pages 45-73, and *al-Tuhfah al-Madaniyyah fi al-Aqeedah as-Salafiyyah* by Hamd bn Naaseer bn Uthmaan Aali Ma`amar, pages 29-50]

15. The Aathars collected by especially `Abdullah bn Ahmad, Ibn Abi Shaybah, al-Laalakaa'ee, Ibn `Abdil-Bar and Ibn al-Munziree, which states that Sufyan at-Thauree, al-Hasan al-Basaree, al-Auzaa'ee, Imam Abu Haneefah, Maalik, as-Shaafi`ee, Ahmad, ad-Dahhaak, Rabee`ah bn `Abdir-Rahman, and many others, among the Salaf, hold that Allaah is in the heavens. [See *Ithbaat Sifah al-Uluw* by Ibn Qudaamah al-Maqdisee, pages 110-132, and *al-Tuhfah al-Madaniyyah fi al-Aqeedah as-Salafiyyah* by Hamd bn Naaseer bn Uthmaan Aali Ma`amar, pages 71-101]

On His *Istiwaa* above the Throne, consider the following verses of the Holy Qur'aan: 7:54, 10:3, 13:2, 20:5, 25:59, 32:4 and 57:4. The truth seekers would see for themselves the position of Islaam on this so called controversial issue.

From the above, it is obvious that Allaah is above the heavens, established above the Throne. Proof #7 above, is the most explicit of the direct references on the transcendence of Allaah. The servant girl's answer that Allaah is above the heavens has to be considered by true Muslims as the only valid answer to the question "Where is Allaah?" because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) ruled that she was a true believer on the basis of it.

The statements of the early scholars of Islaam (Sahaabah, Taabi'oon, Taabi at-Tabi'een and those that follow their footsteps) confirming Allaah's transcendence are too numerous to mention. The 15th century Hadeeth scholar, adh-Dhahabee, wrote a book entitled *al-Uloo lil `Aleey al-Ghaffaar* in which he gathered the statements of over 200 major scholars of the past confirming Allaah's transcendence. (See pp. 118-226 of the book)

As stated above, the leaders of the four Schools of Law have all confirmed Allaah's transcendence. Abu Haneefah, for example, when asked his opinion of a person who says he does not know whether his Lord is in the heavens or earth. Abu Haneefah replied, He has disbelieved, because Allaah has said, 'The Most Merciful is above the throne [20:5]', and His throne is above His seven heavens." He was also asked, "What if a man said that He is above the throne but he does not know whether the throne is in the heavens or on the earth? Abu Haneefah replied, "He has disbelieved because he has denied that He [Allaah] is above the heavens and whoever denies that He is above the heavens has disbelieved." [Narrated by Abu Ismaa'eel al-Ansaaree in his book *al-Faarooq* and quoted in al`Aqeedah at-Tahaawiyah, p. 288. See *at-Tuhfah al-Madniyyah fil Aqeedah as-Salafiyyah* by Hamd bn Naaseer bn Uthmaan Aal Ma`amar and *The Fundamentals of Tawheed* by Abu Ameenah Bilal Philip, p. 130]

heaven,[112] anger, pleasure, and so on, without comparing them to human attributes or interpreting them in a way that leads to their being negated. We reiterate what Imam Ash-Shaafi'i (may Allaah have mercy upon him) said: "I believe in Allaah and in what revelation tells about Him, in the manner He intended, and I believe in the Messenger of Allaah, and in what was related about the Messenger of Allaah, in the manner that He intended."[113]

Similarly, regarding Allaah’s attributes such as the descent to the lower heaven, anger, wrath, like, dislike, laughing, being pleased, to come, to be seeing on the day of Qiyaamah, Imaam Ahmad bn Hanbal (may Allaah have mercy upon him) used to say:

Imaam Maalik also confirmed the transcendence of Allaah. Al-Bayhaqee and ad-Daarimee narrated that a man came to Maalik bin Anas (may Allaah have mercy upon him) and asked him, "O Maalik! The Qur'aan says that ar-Rahmaan (the Bestower of Mercy) ascended the Throne; how did He do that?" Maalik was extremely disturbed by this question, and replied: ‘The istiwaa, (ascendance) is known [in meaning]; but 'how' it took place is not known to people. Believing in its occurrence is compulsory; and questioning its mode of occurrence is a bid'ah (a rejected innovation in the Faith). And I believe indeed that you are committing a bid'ah [by asking this question]."

Abu al-Hasan `Alee al-Ash`aree (the person many people today are claiming to be following in `Aqeedah), in his *al-Ibaanaa an Usool ad-Diyaanaah* and *al-Maqaalaat al-Islaameeyeen* has debunked the concept of 'Allaah is everywhere' and confirmed the transcendence of Allaah. Even in the book of *ar-Risaalah* of Abu Zaid al-Qirawaanee al-Maalikee, Allaah transcendence and establishment above the Throne was confirmed.

To my utmost surprise, the fatawa committee of the Jamaa’atu Nasril Islaam in Nigeria, met in Sokoto and issued a fatawa on this issue but contrary to the methodology of our pious predecessors, as published by Weekly Trust of August 17–23, 2001. I wrote my observation and e-mailed it to Weekly Trust for publication. Unfortunately, they did not publish it, despite several follow-ups.

My Allaah protects us.

[112] The Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Our Lord descends every night to the lowest heaven and He calls: "Is there anyone asking for forgiveness? I will forgive him. Is there anyone asking for anything? I will give him. Is there anyone repenting? I will accept his repentance." And He continues to say this until dawn. [Muslim]

We therefore believe that He descends every night to the lowest heaven, but that His descending is unlike that of His creatures and that it does not involve moving from one place to another. Even as He descends, He continues to be above heavens and above the throne (al-'arsh). To believe otherwise would be implying that Allaah could in some way be contained within the creation which He has stated is not possible and it would be likening it to the descent of His creation.

[113] *Ar-Rawdah An-Niddiyyah*, p. 25, adapted from alharamain.org

‘we accept and believe in them all without any comparison, alteration, negation, or seeking to ascribe a detailed understanding of their exact nature’.[114]

Calling on Allaah by His Names and Attributes[115]

One of the benefits of Allaah’s most beautiful names and most perfect attributes is that they provide for the believer a golden opportunity to earn the pleasure of Allaah and have his prayers (supplications) acceptable by Allaah. The believers are enjoined to call on Allaah by His most beautiful names. Allaah (Praise and Glory be to Him) says: “And Allaah has the most excellent and perfect names, so call on Him by them….”[116]

Calling on Allaah by His most excellent names involves two things:

1. Worshiping Allaah by the meanings and implications of His names and attributes. For example, the Muslim should repent sincerely to Allaah because He *is at-Tawwaab* (The Acceptor of Repentance), celebrate the praises of Allaah with his tongue because He is *as-Samee`* (The All-Hearing), worship Him with the parts of the body because He is *al-Baseer* (The All-Seeing) and fear Him in secret because He is *al-Khabeer* (The Aware).[117]

2. Calling on Allaah by His names and attributes for the fulfilment of one’s need or solving of one’s problem. Here, one mentions the name(s) and attribute(s) of Allaah that connote his du’a at the beginning or end. For example: O the Merciful, have mercy on

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114 *Minhaaj al-Muslim* by Abu Bakr bn Jaabir al-Jazaa’iree, p. 16
115 Ar-Ridwaani dedicated the whole of parts 4 and 5 of his monumental work *Asmaa’ullah Al-Husnaa At-Thaabitah fil Kitaab was Sunnah* to calling on Allah by His names and attributes.
116 al-A`araaf 7:180
117 Ar-Ridwaani, *Asmaa’ullah Al-Husnaa At-Thaabitah fil Kitaab was Sunnah*, part 5, pp. 8-170

me [يا رحيم ارحمنى], O the Provider, provide for me [يا رزاق ارزقنى], O the all-Forgiving, please forgive me [يا غفور اغفرلى], and O the all-Knowing, endow me with knowledge [يا عليم علمنى].[118]

Calling on Allaah by His beautiful names and sublime attributes is one of the three types of seeking of means (*tawassul*) to Allaah, which are lawful and legitimate in Islaam. The other two are seeking a means to Allaah with good deeds and seeking a means to Allaah via the du'a of the living among His righteous slaves.

Seeking a means to Allaah with His beautiful names and sublime attributes is prescribed in Islaam in the unanimous opinion of the scholars and there is no difference of opinion about that. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and his noble companions used to seek a means to Allaah with His names and attributes according to the authentic Sunnah.

Among the du'a (supplications) of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), are the statements:

1. "O *al-Hayy* (Living), O *al-Qayyoom* (Omnipotent), by Your Mercy I seek aid."
"يا حي يا قيوم برحمتك أثتغيث"

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allaah be upon him) would say the above du’a when he implored seriously and strongly.[119]

2. "I seek refuge in your Compassion from Your just punishment. I seek refuge in Your pleasure from your displeasure. I seek refuge in You from You. Glorious is your face - I cannot encompass sufficient glorification of you. You are as You have glorified yourself."

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[118] Ar-Ridwaani, *Asmaa’ullah Al-Husnaa At-Thaabitah fil Kitaab was Sunnah*, part 4, pp. 11-130. See also Muhammad Saalih al-`Uthaymeen, *al-Qawaa`id al-Muthlaa*, p. 6
[119] at-Tirmidhee and Haakim: Hasan

"اللهم إني أعوذ برضاك من سخطك وبمعافاتك من عقوبتك وبك منك، لاأحصي ثناء عليك كما أثنيت أنت على نفسك"

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to say the above supplication in his sujood.[120]

3. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) heard a man saying: "Oh *Allaah* I ask and beseech you because for You is the praise and there is nothing worthy of worship besides You [You are Alone and without partner] *al-Mannaan*, Oh *Badee'us samaawaati wal-ard* (Originator of the heavens and the Earth), Oh *Dhul Jalaali wal ikraam* (Possessor of Majesty and Honour), Oh *al-Hayy, al-Qayyoom* (Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent), I beg You for al-Jannah (paradise) and seek Your refuge from an-Naar (hellfire)."

"اللهم إني أسألك بأن لك الحمد لاإله إلا أنت، وحدك لاشريك لك، المنان، يا بديع السماوات والأرض، يا ذا الجلال والإكرام، يا حي يا قيوم، إني أسألك الجنة، وأعوذ بك من النار"

So the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, This man has beseeched Allaah with His Greatest Name [إسم الله الأعظم][121] by which if one asks by it he is given and if he supplicates by it he will be answered.' [122]

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[120] Imaam Muslim

[121] In addition to the du'a in (3) and (4) above, in which Allaah's Greatest names, الحي القيوم and الأحد الصمد occurred, Allaah's Greatest names have also come in these two verses as contained in the hadeeth of Ahmad, Abu Daawud and Ibn Maajah on the authority of Asmaa bnt Yazeed:

"Allaah! Laa ilaaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), *al-Hayy* (the Ever Living), *al-Qayyoom* (the One Who sustains and protects all that exists)." - al-Baqarah, 2:255 and "Allaah! Laa ilaaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), *al-Hayy* (the Ever Living), *al-Qayyoom* (the One Who sustains and protects all that exists)." - Aali Imran, 3:2. In another report, transmitted by Ibn Maajah from Abu Umaamah, it is said that the statement of Allaah: "And (all) faces shall be humbled before (Allaah), *al-Hayy* (the Ever Living), *al-Qayyoom* (the One Who sustains and protects all that exists)." - Ta-Ha, 20:111 is also one of Allaah's Greatest names.

It should be pointed out that what some scholars have related in their books that Allaah has three thousand names (3,000); 1000 are only known by angels, 1,000 known only by prophets, 300 are in Torah (Old Testament), 300 are in Zabur (Psalms of David), 300 are in the New Testament, and 99 are in the Qu'aan. This makes 2,999 names. One name which has been hidden by Allah, has NO basis at all.

[122] Abu Daawud, Ahmad and an-Nasaa'ee: Saheeh

4. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) entered the mosque while a man was just about to finish his prayer. The latter made the tashahhud and said, "O Allaah, I am asking You, O *Allaah*, *al-Waahid* (the One), *al-Ahad* (the Only), *as-Samad* (the Absolute), who begets nor is begotten, nor is anyone like Him, to forgive my sins, for You are *al-Ghafoor* (the Forgiving), *ar-Raheem* (the Merciful)."

   اللهم إني أسألك يا الله الواحد الأحد الصمد، الذى لم يلد ولم يولد، ولم يكن له كفوا أحد أن تغفرلي ذنوبي، إانك أنت الغفور الرحيم

   The Prophet then said three times, "He has been forgiven."[123]

5. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to say at the end of his tashahhud, 'O Allaah by Your knowledge of the unseen and Your power over the creation, let me live if You know that living is best for me, and let me die if You know that dying is better for me.'[124]

   اللهم بعلمك الغيب، وقدرتك على الخلق أحينى ما علمت الحياة خيرا لى، وتوفنى اذا كانت الوفاة خيرا لي

Above are examples of the du'a of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and his companions (may Allaah be pleased with him) with the beautiful names and sublime attributes of Allaah. As-Shaykh Muhammad Naasiruddeen al-Albaanee said: "Seeking a means to Allaah with His most beautiful names and most perfect attributes is one of the dearest and most beloved things to Allaah. This is why the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to seek a means to Allaah by them. And since Allaah (Blessed be He, the Most High) says in the Qur'aan: " And whatever the Apostle gives you, accept it..'[125], we should call on Allaah using the various du'a taught by the Prophet (peace and blessings of

123 Abu Daawud, Ahmad and an-Nasaa'ee: Saheeh
124 an-Nasaa'ee and al-Haakim: Saheeh
125 al-Hashr 59:8

Allaah be upon him). That is better than all the du'a formulas we could invent a thousand fold."[126]

Du'a, according to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), is the essence of worship. This means that apart from using the names and attributes of Allaah as a means of solving our problems, we are also required to use them as a means of worshipping Allaah to earn His pleasure. However, for any act of worship to be acceptable to Allaah, it must fulfil two basic conditions: First, the act must be done sincerely for the pleasure of Allaah and not for the recognition and praise of human beings. The second condition is that *the act be done in accordance with the prophetic way (Sunnah).*

The question is: Do we call on Allaah by His perfect names and most high attributes in accordance with the established Sunnah?

If one looks at what is happening to Allaah's names, how the names are recited or repeated, and the way and manner the names are implored, one feels like shedding tears. Allaah's names have been turned into good luck charms. Some Muslims, in ignorance, repeat His names and assign qualities to them, which have absolutely no basis in the Qur'aan, the authentic Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) or the practice of the Sahaabah. Spiritual rituals have been invented for the repetition of the divine names and fantastic stories have been woven around them. In some cases, people mention the name of Allaah on its own or even worse, they repeat the pronoun "Huwa" ("He"). Others will say if you say so-and-so X amount of times then you will get such and such reward e.g. reciting the 99 names of Allaah in certain combinations and quantities will do certain things.

Many people think that the essence of Allaah's names is to merely achieve success in this world through them. They think that the names are just effective keys to call Allaah to solve all our daily

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[126] *at-Tawassul: Anwaa`uh wa Ahkaamuh,* (Al-Maktab Al-Islaamee, 1975), p. 35

problems. Little did they know this aspect of tawheed to be one of the categories of belief in Allaah. And that knowledge of Allaah and His names and attributes is the noblest and best of all knowledge, and occupying oneself with seeking this knowledge and studying it properly is the pursuit of the highest objective, and acquiring this knowledge is one of the best gifts a person may be given. The few ones that know this are mostly deceived by most of the available writings on the subject in which the du'a aspect (that was assigned baseless qualities and combinations) was emphasised devoid of the fundamentals, foundations and rules of the names explained above.

What is even more disturbing in Nigeria is the unavailability of English literature on the subject that explore the do's and don'ts of this important aspect of tawheed to its fullest. In fact, the attitude of many people toward the names and attributes of Allaah is pathetic.

For example, the following routine is prescribed in a book on Allaah's 99 names: "To achieve quick result he who would like to use a name of Allaah should perform ablution and offer at least two raka'ats of a nafilah. For the first raka'at fatiha and "Li'ilafi Quraish" and in the second raka'at fatiha with "Inna Anzalnahu" should be recited. For each Name of Allaah, this method should be followed strictly.

1. Alhamdulillah 1 (Suratul Fatiha)

2. Astaghfirullah 3 times

3. Then you recite this Khutbah: "Allaahumma inni as'aluka bi asma'ikal husnaa allati fi mahkami Kitabika munzilan ala lisani Nabiyyikal Mursali (wa lillahil Asma'ul Husna fada'uhu biha), faha ana ad'uuka biha lil-Jalabilkhairi wa dafi'il sharri kama amartana innaka la tukhliful mi'ad" 1

4. Then any name you want to use, see what is mentioned on the method of the name (i.e. the qualities and combinations)

5. Allaahumma salli ala Sayidina Muhammad wasallim 66 times

Then at the end of this, you appeal to Allaah (Praise and Glory be to Him) to answer your prayer within the shortest possible time.[127]

The following examples are some of the spiritual prescriptions prescribed by the author:

"al-Khaaliq"

Method: recite "Lailaha Illallahu al-Khaaliq" 787, then "Alam Nashrah" 721

Aim: To secure the service of an invisible Angel, the benefit of whose deeds will accrue to one on the last day"[128]

"al-Haleem"

Method: write "Lailaha illallahu al-Haleem" 22 on a piece of paper and put that paper in the place where crops are planted, and then recite "Alam Nashrah 88

Aim: to protect the crop from all kind of destruction or harm"[129]

Another example is the following routine prescribed in another book on Allaah's 99 names: "He who would like to repeat a name of Allaah should first say at least 700 times, "La ilaha illa'llah Muhammad-ur-Rasulullah (There is no god but God and Muhammad is His messenger). To begin, one should clean oneself with a full ablution making certain that all parts of the body are touched by water. If this is not possible, one should perform wudoo

[127] '*99 most beautiful names of Allaah with their meaning, Hisab measurement, method of using and aim of usage*', produced by `Abdullahi Dahiru Salga, (Al-Asha-Ari press production, Khalilullah bookshop, Kurmi market, Kano), p. 2
[128] *99 most beautiful names of Allaah*, p. 5
[129] *99 most beautiful names of Allaah*, p. 10

(the washing of the parts of the body which are generally exposed), as if preparing for prayers. On the days of repetition one should not eat meat. The place chosen for the repetition should be clean. If these guidelines are observed, Allaah's answer could be quick. Preferably the person should be alone and the repetitions said during the night."[130] The author then narrates about four fables to illustrate the supposed power produced by repetition of the divine names.

The following examples are some of the spiritual prescriptions asserted by the author:

"Ya Qaabid

He who writes this name on 50 pieces of food (fruit, bread, etc.) for 40 days will be free from hunger."[131]

"Ya-Khaafid

Those who fast three days, and on the fourth day in a gathering read this Name 70,000 times. Allaah will free them from harm by their enemy."[132]

All such routines and formulae cannot be found anywhere in the Prophet's Sunnah. In fact, reciting the names of Allaah or any form of remembrance of Allaah (dhikr) in certain combinations or in certain place, or at a certain time, or in a certain manner, or in a certain number, or attaching magical qualities or reward to it that is not prescribed in Sharee'ah is bid'ah (innovation), as this completely negate the concept of al-Mutaaba`ah (exemplification of the Prophet [peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him]), which is the second condition of worship, as explained earlier on.[133]

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[130] Shems Friedlander, *Ninety-Nine Names of Allaah*, (Islamic Publications Bureau, Lagos, Nigeria, 1985), p. 10

[131] Shems Friedlander, *Ninety-Nine Names of Allaah*, p. 39

[132] Shems Friedlander, *Ninety-Nine Names of Allaah*, p. 41

[133] For detail discussion on al-Mutaaba`ah (exemplification of the Prophet [peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him]), see Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-`Uthaymeen, *al-*

Shaykh `Abd-Allaah bn Munayyi` was asked about the ruling on reciting the names of Allaah in certain combinations, and he said: “This is not permissible, and if he believes in it, it is bid'ah. Every dhikr that involves reciting a certain number of times, or in a certain place, or at a certain time, or in a certain manner that is not prescribed in Sharee'ah is bid'ah. With regard to the most beautiful names of Allaah, the way to use these in worship is to call upon Allaah by these names, as He says (interpretation of the meaning), "And (all) the most beautiful names belong to Allaah, so call on Him by them..." [al-A'raaf 7:180]. Merely reciting them in certain combinations is not a prescribed form of worship. And Allaah knows best.”[134]

It is true that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did mention certain rewards for the mentioning of phrases, which include some of Allaah’s names such as the following examples. One day, the Prophet’s daughter, Faatimah, came to him and asked for a servant. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to her, “May I teach you something better than what you both have asked for? Whenever you go to bed, say: ‘Subhaanallaah (Glory be to God) thirty-three times, Alhamdulillah (All praise be to God) thirty-three times and Allaahu Akbar (Allaah is the Greatest) thirty-four times. It is better for you both than a servant.’”[135] On another occasion, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whosoever says, ‘Subhaanallaahi wa bi hamdih (Glory be to Allaah and may He be praised), one hundred times in a day, his sins will be removed from him even if they were like the loam on the ocean.”[136]

However, there are no cases in the authentic Sunnah where the repetition of Allaah’s names alone is prescribed, nor are they given

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*Ibda` fee Kamaal as-Shar` wa Khatr al-Ibtida`* (Wizaarah al-I`ilaam, Jeddah, 1410), pp. 21-24

[134] Islaam Q&A (www.islam-qa.com), Question #3927

[135] al-Bukhaaree and Muslim

[136] al-Bukhaaree and Muslim

magical qualities like those quoted previously. The repetition of formulae like “Laa ilaaha illallaah” (There is no god but Allaah) is to reinforce its meaning in the psyche, to make it a part of one’s thought and hence a part of one’s day-to-day vocabulary. And it is the firm belief in its meaning, which effects changes in a Muslim’s life and not the supposed miraculous properties of parroted words.[137]

Some people in ignorance repeat the names of Allaah in singing and in some cases even dance during the repetition. Others mention the names of Allaah as dhikr in congregation, without respect and concentration and in some cases mention the name of Allaah on its own or even repeat the pronoun “Huwa” (“He”). These also have no basis in the Qur’aan, the authentic Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) or the practice of the Sahaabah.

Muslims should be extra careful on the use of Allaah’ names, and should always remember that Allaah’s most beautiful names and sublime attributes are one of the three categories of tawheed, which make one’s eemaan (faith) complete. The methodology of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and our pious predecessors should be strictly adhered to in order for them to ripe the full benefit of this important aspect of tawheed.

Whoever makes the Qur'aan and Sunnah his points of reference concerning his worship will not fail to distinguish right from wrong. We ask Allaah to bring us back to His religion in a gentle manner. And Allaah knows best.

Conclusion

The knowledge of the names of Allaah and His attributes that are mentioned in the Qur'aan and authentic Sunnah, which signifies Allaah's absolute perfection from all angles, is one of the greatest branches of knowledge that causes the increase of eemaan. To

[137] Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, *Tafseer Soorah al-Hujuraat*, pp. 147-148

occupy oneself with learning them, understanding them, and fully investigating them embodies many great benefits, such as: gaining love from Allaah, fear and remembrance of Him, hope in Him and sincerity of action for Him alone.

I thank Allaah (the Most High) Who, in His infinite mercy, has given me the opportunity of writing this book. I ask Him to put this little effort in my *hasanaat* and overlook my shortcoming herein. I also hope that the book has provided the basics of *tawheed al-Asmaa wa as-Sifaat* in a comprehensive and concise manner.

May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad, and his family and companions, and grant them peace.

وسبحانك اللهم وبحمدك أشهد أن لاإله إلا أنت أستغفرك وأتوب إليك